

Lutheran World Federation

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Youth

Magazine

Special
Feature

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Department for
Mission and Development

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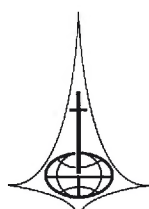
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Editorial

Dear friends,

Without memory there is no hope. As I write my last editorial for Youth Magazine, I think of the many memories I have been privileged to collect during my four years of service as the LWF Secretary for Youth in Church and Society, and I am thankful for them because they strengthen my hope.

Unfortunately, the strongest are those related to conflicts, violence, poverty and injustice, which cause suffering to many people. Whenever I visited the LWF member churches in different parts of the world I was confronted with such situations. The numerous letters from you, the Youth Magazine readers, also reflect in many ways the difficult situation of young people today.

Then, there are the memories related to our conferences and workshops. The excitement of the planning stage of each meeting, the frustration of slow responses from those invited or nominated, the thrilling expectation of who will actually be coming to the meeting, how they are going to contribute, what will be the product of the meeting. Each of the meetings organized in the four years was unique and provided valuable input for further work at the Youth Desk and the Federation as a whole.

The most precious memories, however, are those related to many gifted and motivated people I met during the four years. When meeting and getting to know new people, I was always amazed and reminded of the greatness of God, the Creator. The challenging discussions, the

laughing, singing, eating and drinking, sharing of personal stories, sharing of hopes and frustrations all gave real depth to my work. It is this personal fellowship with people who share the same faith which makes the church a living body of Christ. If we are not able to relate to each other in sharing, we are no longer church.

It is because of these memories that I have hope: hope for a better future in this world, hope at the threshold of the new millennium, where many, especially young people, do not see hope. If you share this hope with me, it is our responsibility to cultivate it. Of course,

we can do it in the good old way of cherishing church traditions, but we must also look for new ways of sharing this hope when we see that the power of the tradition is too weak to carry our hope.

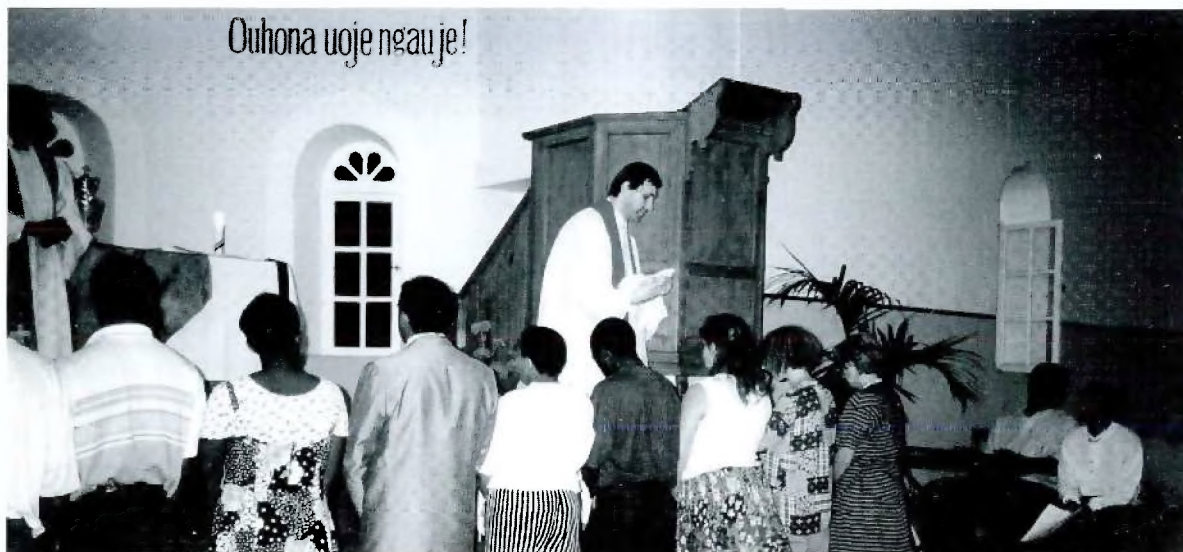
This issue of Youth Magazine is entitled "Vision Beyond 2000". We have collected stories and information filled with hope from different regions about what is moving young people at this special time. If we are honest with

ourselves, if we are able to admit our share of responsibility in what went wrong, and if we have the courage to confess our sins, then we can see hope beyond all which would otherwise make us blind to what God has prepared for those who love him.

Yours,

Ondrej Probstrednik

**The most
precious
memories
are those
related to
people**



ALYC, Okahandja,
Namibia, 1998.
Closing Worship,
Holy Communion
by O. Probstrednik
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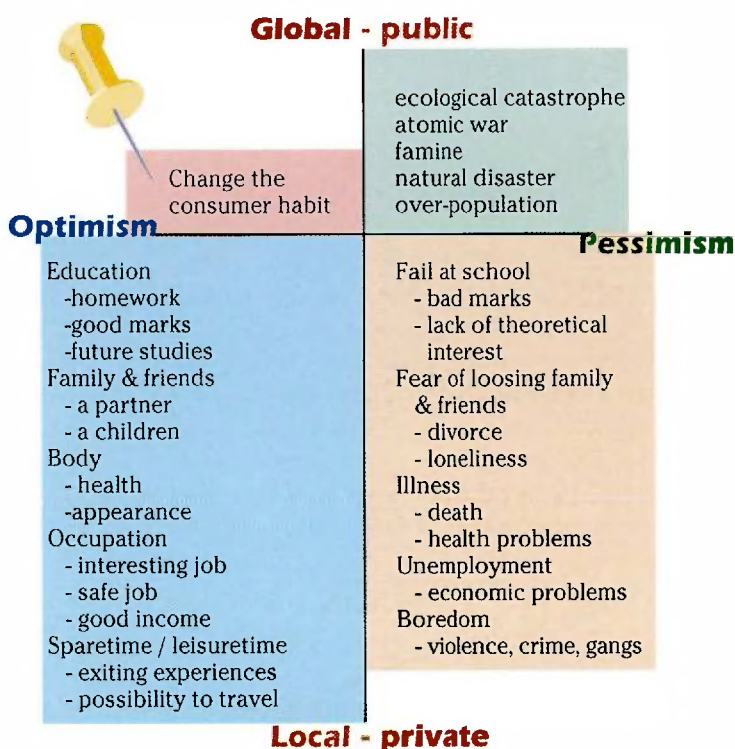
Longing for Belonging

The Language of the Future

Dr. Paul Otto Brunstad, Norway,

published recently a doctoral dissertation called "Youth and World view – College Students' Faith and Expectations about the Future". The dissertation focuses on 100 secondary school students, aged 18-20, and their longings, dreams, hopes and fears about the future in Norway:

My young informants seem in many ways to have lost their faith and hope in a meaningful global future and in the notion of a perpetual progress that will solve our present problems. Progress is no longer a living hope, but more a fate to which they feel condemned. *"When it comes to the future the only thing I can say is that I'm glad I'm not my children. The world will soon be a hell of a place. I belong to the last generation who could grow up surrounded by fresh air and in prosperity."*



This apocalyptic vision is not formed by a religious, but by a secularized and scientific understanding of the future. They replace a sovereign God with a sovereign humankind ruled by greed and selfishness and with an inherent ability to destroy the world. The end of time is not understood as a cosmic catastrophe caused by divine forces, but is more a result of humankind's own devastating activities. Life is unstable, unpredictable and inconstant. This situation makes it impossible to change anything, because in an unpredictable world it is not possible either to make or carry out plans. Our common situation is difficult, uncertain and out of control. There

is a kind of hopelessness and powerlessness to control anything but one's own life. This situation results in a focus on the present, the here-and-now, and on immediate gratification.

Even though the global future is problematic, there are still signs of hope, which encourage further action. Efforts to create a better future seem to have a very private character; altruism tends to be limited to one's group of intimate friends and family. Optimism is tied to the intimate and private world. *"I want to get an good education, a good occupation, a husband and children."* A short perspective with focus on attainable goals generates a kind of local optimism, but at the same time, this shortsighted strategy reveals new and threatening problems, which create distaste for the local situation, too. Through regression into a shortsighted, day-to-day perspective my informants try to achieve a practical, meaningful and less complicated life. Through this strategy, which also implies a negative view of public life and institutions, they become agents of their own lives, able to design and create their own future. On this small "stage" they can play the leading role, and be their own master. To achieve their goals in life, they have to be skillful, competent and lucky. In all this, they have no one else to trust but themselves. A pessimistic view of the future encourages activity, but not so much solidarity. Responsibility for the future is closely tied to opportunity to change the situation, without which the young people do not feel responsible for our common future. Their capability, energy, creativity are therefore directed at the private sphere.

Development characterized by regression and privatization seems to result in a new focus on the body. The body seems to be the last resort of hope. When the old storytelling traditions and their stories of hope have been silenced, and *the communities of memories* (Bellah 1985:152) e.g. the family, the Church etc., have been marginalized, the body is drawn into building an identity and forming a self. Young people have to make their own choices, without help from previous generations. They become separated from the larger communities, traditions and practices, stories and narratives that earlier played an important part in the formation of a stable identity. Movie and rock stars replace the old role models, becoming the new heroes, teachers and tutors.

This emancipated, post-traditional and privatized life is nevertheless fragile. When the future depends on what you yourself are able to do, the risk that something might fail is high (see

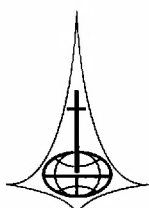


figure). Young people do, therefore, feel the pressure, a pressure that produces what I would call a local- or private- pessimism, a kind of postmodern melancholy, irony or boredom. They have all experienced that life is fragile. They try to fill the emptiness and overcome their boredom in different ways, e.g. through consumerism, entertainment and hazardous activity – reckless driving, base jumping etc. They use irony to establish a protective zone between the complicated world and their own feelings, but this does not cure the illness. It just provides a short mental release.

Individualization, the experience of a world falling apart, the loss of a utopian vision of the future have created a longing for community, for a place to rest, for a house, a home in which one could seek shelter and comfort. Emancipation and progress seem to be replaced by a longing for security and belonging. The individual seeks protection and belonging in a bigger entity, a house or a corporation. The House Culture reflects openness towards religion and spiritual life, although not in the traditional sense such as Christianity, but more in the line with New Age and alternative religion. Terms like "techno-shamanism" and "religious ecstasy" relate to important issues in the field of religion.

It might be that the term *belonging* in many ways strikes the very core of identity. Identity is basically tied to a feeling of attachment, of belonging. To have an identity is to be part of an entity bigger than oneself. The longing for a living body, a corporation, a community to move into becomes a pressing need.

The question is: How do important institutions in society meet this challenge, this longing for belonging, on the threshold of a new millennium?

Revisiting the Church, which claims to be the body of Christ, the *house* of God, might give us an interesting perspective of the actual situation. Even though both a house and a body are normally visible, it seems as if the Church has become what Jacques Ellul calls a "disembodied wraith" (Guinness 1983:51), a community without a body. The church has in many ways become a smile, a mouthpiece, a message without a body, without a community, an institution that finds it hard to offer, in the spirit of Matthew, young people protection, shelter and fellowship. The Church, which started as a "table society," where the master himself shared bread with his disciples, with his *com-panions*, has become a disembodied, tableless society around words. It

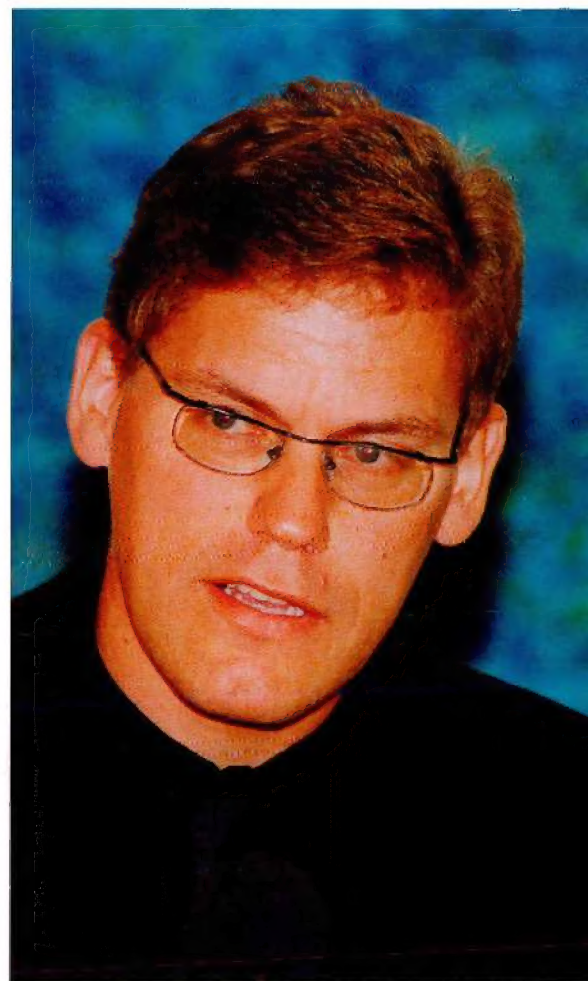
has developed from *some-body* to *no-body*. It is not that easy for a new generation to find and join a corporation with *nobody*. Instead of an eating-together-community we have got a speaking-together-community, as in the rest of the society (Falk 1994). Community is replaced by communication. The Church has become more verbal and oral than corporal.

My informants are afraid of being invisible, afraid of loneliness, to be forgotten. In a society where young people are surrounded by faceless and disembodied voices on answering machines, on the television- or computer screen and other electronic and digital transmitters, it is no wonder that a creepy feeling of invisibility makes itself felt.

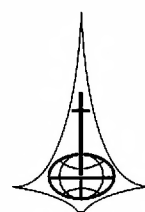
In this situation new religious and political groups are able to see invisible young people. They offer a place to rest, a place of protection, experiences, belonging and, therefore, also a new identity. Their odd, and maybe devastating, mission and goals are overshadowed by their promises of fellowship and friendship. To be taken in by a sect, a new religious movement, an extreme charismatic group, a criminal gang, a political corporation on the far left or right is understandable and at the outset, at least offers a satisfactory life.

The future of new generations is at stake. How could we give young people a feeling of belonging and protection, a place where their own, fragile bodies might be part of a bigger entity? Where could they find *some-body* to nurture and strengthen them and still give them freedom to move and develop? *Some-body* who could share bread with them and walk two more miles with them? Not only a silent body, but a body with a mouth telling new generations stories of hope, which both liberate and empower them.

Dr. Paul Otto
Brunstad,
Norway



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Reconciled Generations

A Vision Beyond 2000

Ondrej Prostředník

A program of the LWF Youth Desk to mark the new millennium.

We want to enter the next millennium as reconciled generations. This is how young people present at the last Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) in Hong Kong expressed their feelings at the dawn of the new millennium. As the third millennium approaches, Christian churches all over the world are drawing up plans to celebrate the year 2000. Festivities to mark the new millennium are seen by the churches as an opportunity for mutual learning, mutual challenge, mutual commitment and mutual reconciliation. This is, after all, what the Apostle Paul calls us to do when he writes: "All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation" (2 Corinthians 5:18).

The objectives of the program are to:

- CELEBRATE the 2000th anniversary of the birth of Christ through active participation in local, regional and global events;
- CELEBRATE and deepen the fellowship of Lutheran youth worldwide through worship and Bible studies;
- FORMULATE and share visions of hope in the context of global trends;
- SUPPORT the Jubilee 2000 Campaign for the cancellation of international debt;
- SEEK peace, justice and reconciliation through prayer, advocacy, dialogue and solidarity.

There are many unresolved conflicts between political groups, tribes, nations, religions and confessions, between rich and poor, women and men, young and old in our world today. The ministry of reconciliation, to which we are called through the word of God, should become a priority in our lives at the dawn of the third millennium.

This special moment in time of the new millennium could be used meaningfully to improve bad relationships and start new ones on the basis of the reconciliation by way of which God has reconciled us to himself through Christ. In

accepting the ministry of reconciliation we are called to seek peace, justice and reconciliation through prayer, advocacy, dialogue and solidarity wherever we live and work.

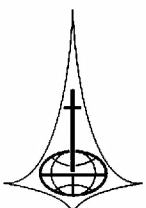
The LWF Hong Kong Assembly resolution "Year 2000 celebrations of the birth of Christ" encourages member churches "to give significant attention to and participate actively in the anniversary year 2000 celebrations in Jerusalem."

However, because of the profound social and economic problems in the world today many young people are anxious and unsure about their future and look for support in doomsday cults and apocalyptic sects in relation to the year 2000. To offer visions of hope and seek realistic ways out of despair is an important ministry which churches can offer to young people at the threshold of the new millennium.

The LWF/ Department for Mission and Development (DMD) Youth Desk is proposing a program of activities starting in 1999 and continuing throughout the year 2000 to mark the start of the new millennium. These activities will start at the local and regional levels, and will culminate in a global event. The program will enable youth in member churches to participate actively in the year 2000 celebrations. It will also use the momentum of the new millennium to deepen and celebrate the fellowship of Lutheran youth worldwide and will seek peace, justice and reconciliation through prayer, advocacy, dialogue and solidarity.

The presentation made by youth to the Ninth LWF Assembly in Hong Kong entitled "The LWF 2000 and Beyond" will serve as the theme for the program.

The LWF Youth Desk is approaching and encouraging the youth constituency in the LWF member churches to participate in local and national events marking the year 2000, particularly those with an ecumenical character. In countries where no ecumenical activities are planned, Lutheran youth will be encouraged and assisted to initiate such activities. Lutheran youth will join ecumenical events already planned in the regions. The LWF Youth Desk will secure the participation of Lutheran youth in the planning of regional ecumenical events. Contacts have been made in Asia where the Asian Students and Youth Gathering 2000 will be held in January 2000. In Europe, the European Lutheran Youth Pilgrimage to Vadstena, Sweden in August 2000, will be organized jointly with the LWF Youth Desk and the Diocese of Linköping. In Latin America, the regional youth event will be attached to the Latin



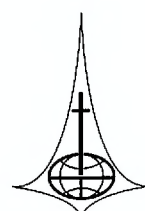


LWF Ninth Assembly, 1997.
Youth Presentation:
The LWF 2000 and Beyond.
©LWF/K.Ward.

American Council of Churches' (CLAI) Assembly which will meet in October 2000 with the theme "Free to Build Peace." The Youth Desk is also in contact with the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) to identify ways of possible cooperation with its program Youth Week 2000 (21-28 May 2000) focusing on international debt cancellation and reconstruction. In North America, the possibility of including young adults from different regions in the young adults' meeting "Come to the Feast" have been discussed. The Youth Desk will also promote cross-regional participation in the above mentioned regional events. Seven youth ambassadors (thirty-five in total) will be selected from each region to attend a global meeting organized as an integral part of this program in 2001 in Pales-

tine. The main emphasis of this event will be the continuation of what is brought by the ambassadors from the regions. A vision for youth of the next millennium will be formulated and carried back to the churches. There will be a pilgrimage to significant places, such as Jerusalem, Nazareth and Bethlehem. A film of the event will be made to communicate its content to the wider constituency and provide a foundation for ongoing youth work in this area.

The ministry of reconciliation was given to us by God (2 Corinthians 5:18). Therefore it is imperative that we exercise this ministry faithfully, whatever our position. It is our hope that the LWF Youth Desk, through its program Vision Beyond 2000, can strengthen young people in the member churches meaningfully in this ministry.



AFRICA

Jubileum 2000

All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) Youth Week 2000

(Excerpts from AACC Information)

The AACC Youth Desk is organizing a process called Jubileum 2000 to mark the start of the new millennium. The focus of this process is international debt cancellation and reconstruction. One of its highlights was the Youth Week held from 23-30 May 1999. It will end with the Youth Week 2000 scheduled to take place 21-28 May 2000. The LWF Youth Desk is encouraging young people in the LWF member churches to participate actively.

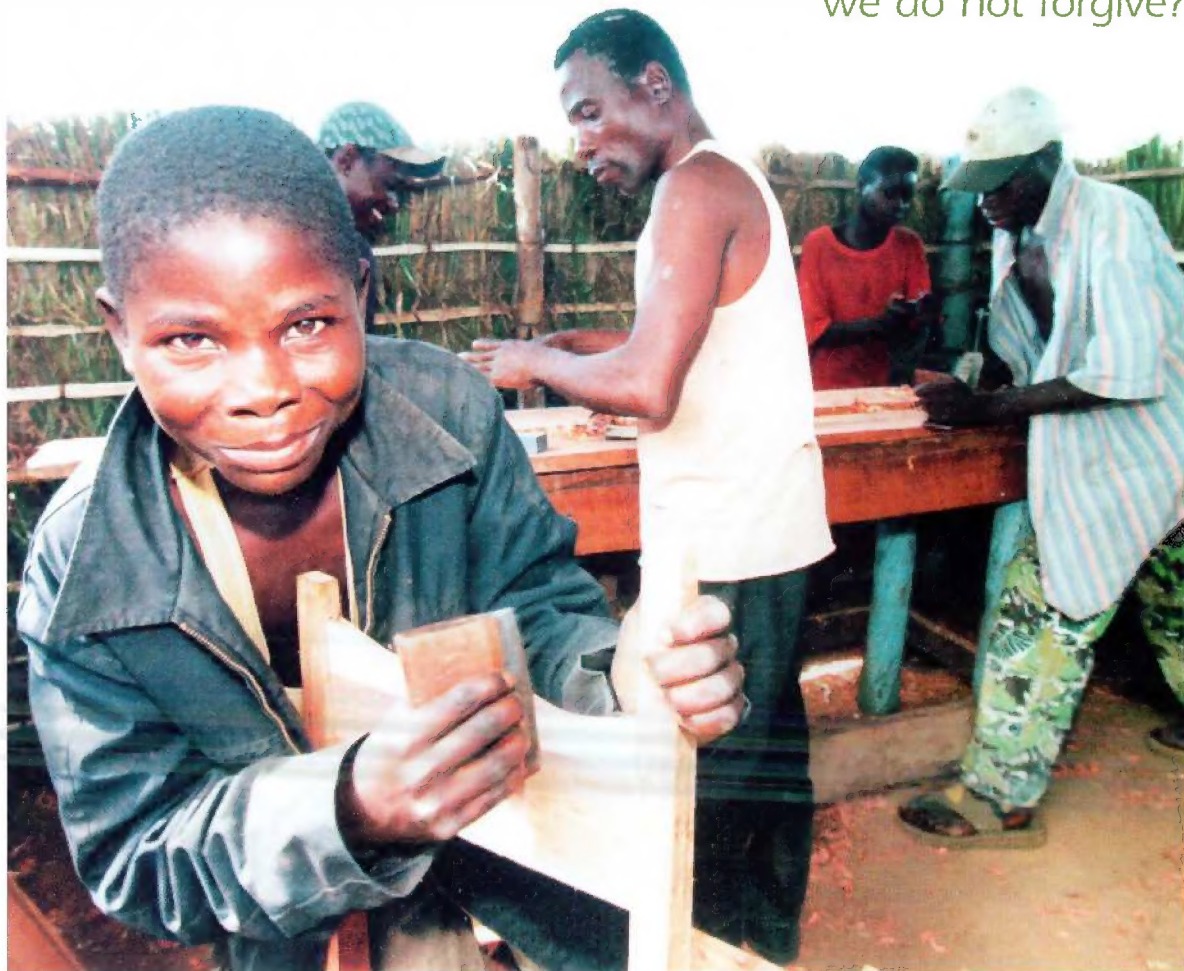
The AACC's Youth Week continues to be a tool and a network through which young people are reached, ownership and localization of AACC activities become a reality, implementation and monitoring of AACC programs is witnessed, and most importantly, processes are put into place to impact local reality. It is through the Youth Week that young people reach out, witness, implement and have an impact.

A Jubilee of Reconstruction

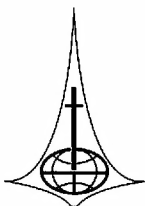
The dilemma of our times is that much is being said and written, but little is being done for the renewal and redemption of humanity. We must turn away from the selfish demands of power and honor and invest the power given to us by God and the people in the service of people. The continent of Africa is calling, with tears and blood, for a common vision of one Africa and one family of brothers and sisters, where justice, freedom, development, prosperity and peace will be the basis and objective of all our words and actions. It is necessary to concretely identify what keeps us in bondage; we must rid ourselves of whatever enslaves us. We have to admit that we are facing new realities in this reconstruction process toward peace building in Africa.

....What will happen if
we do not repent?

....What will happen if
we do not forgive?



Visitation program
to refugee camps
in Luena. The
LWF looks after
refugee camps
with 13'000 persons
in Luena. Young
men are trained
for a better life.
©epd-bild/Lohnes



.....What will happen if we do not reconcile?

..... What will happen to reconstruction if we do nothing?.....

Reconstruction is the Restoration of God's Image Africa

Whatever else the Jubilee is, it involves reconstruction. Reconstruction is a participatory and communal process of rebuilding something which has fallen apart or reorganizing that which has been disorganized, or bringing justice into an unjust situation, or changing a sinful life to a righteous one and transforming sorrow into happiness.

In the African context, it is bringing the fullness of life, freedom from war, poverty, and so on.

The task of rebuilding Africa lies in the hands of Africans. We need to repent and forgive especially in situations of conflict. But reconciliation requires, after mutual forgiveness has taken place between parties who have been separated by enmity, that they walk into a common future together. Therefore, everyone has to take responsibility by clearly identifying a solid foundation and mobilizing all available skills in the reconstruction process.

This requires us to:

- Know who we are - children of God in Africa.
- Objectives/aim of our reconstruction - fullness of life/abundant life (cultural, socio-economic, political, spiritual, and so on).
- Our mission - mission of Christ, love, peace and service.

Areas of Reconstruction

There are many areas in need of reconstruction, starting at the individual (grassroots) level up to the highest level:

- Individual
- Family life
- Church/religious life
- Political life
- Economic life
- Educational life

Agents in the Reconstruction Process

Since the amount of damage done is vast, and not just individuals but the whole of society has been affected, we must look into the roles of the different stakeholders in the reconstruction process:

- Individuals
- Youth
- The Church
- Politicians
- Economists

Elements of

Sustainable Reconstruction

To ensure sustainable reconstruction, some elements have to be taken into account or problems will return. These elements are:

- Repentance
- Forgiveness
- Motivation and determination
- Healing
- Hope

The Process

- Youth Week 23-30 May 1999.

- Submission of reports on launching of Youth Week: July 1999.

- Implementation of Youth Week projects: June 1999-April 2000.

- Evaluate Youth Week 1999 and launch Youth Week 2000: 21-28 May 2000.

- Plan, in the context of the Jubilee, for AACC & World Student Christian Federation (WSCF) Youth & Students Assembly, June - September 2000. The purpose is to produce a Youth and Students Jubilee 2000 ministry resource book.

- Youth & Students Assembly: more information will be provided early on in the year 2000.

- Let us decide on the Africa Agenda for the new millennium.

- Let us determine our destiny for the new millennium.

- Let us note that things are not just going to change by themselves in the new millennium. We, people of the African continent, must change things.

- Let us celebrate the Youth Week, and be part of the debt cancellation networks and mission. Be part of the renewal.

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ASIA

Review, Reflect, Renew : Building Sustainable Communities

Asian students & Youth Gathering,

21-28 Jan. 2000, Thailand

(by the Christian Conference of Asia - Youth)

Most Asian countries have gained their independence from colonization since the 1950s. Rapid development and globalization during the last five decades have led to unprecedented changes there. Asian countries seem to be enjoying both autonomy and prosperity in this post-colonial era, but they have brought with them countless changes in the lives of many people and in society as a whole. Asian youth have become vulnerable to these changes in education, culture and values.

The various regional youth and student organizations in Asia and the Pacific are well aware of the situation. In 1993, an Asian Student and Youth Gathering (ASYG) was held to study and reflect on development in the Asia-Pacific region and worldwide. The gathering helped strengthen partnership among these organizations as well as facilitate their mission and participation in society. They decided to meet again in 2000 to further the process of shared study, analysis and reflection on the issues and concerns related to development and globalization. It is hoped that as a result of this process, a common understanding of development and globalization in the post-colonial era from the perspective of youth and students in the Asia-Pacific region will

be achieved. In addition, it is expected that alternative paradigm/s of development will be identified for which youth could and will work. The new "developments" in Asia have likewise brought with them countless changes in the lives of many people in Asia. Of those who were already marginalized, those who are continuously driven to greater poverty, communities, where rights have been disregarded in the name of development, and almost irreversible destruction of the environment. While many are trying to cope with the changes, they also fall prey to their demands: strains in family ties and relationships as migration increases (from rural to urban areas, as well as worker migration), rural communities that are forced to adapt to changes in production and consumption patterns, students who are "molded" according to the demands of skilled labor.

The report of the Youth Leaders Meeting on New Paradigms held in Hyderabad, India in March 1995 highlights the following: "Government responses focus on increased development, industrialization and conformity to global financial and capital investment trends. Invariably, such development involves environmental degradation, loss of indigenous land rights, geographical displacement of low (labor) classes, human rights violation and political manipulation of people's attitudes and willingness to comply. This common understanding of development also necessitates industry-based training as opposed to generalist education, the self-fulfilling triumph of economic rationalism, domestication of social action and organizations, a strengthened conservative middle-class and church community, and an increase in media influence over social consciousness. In all of these, the trend is towards increased wealth for the powerful, and greater subjugation and powerlessness for the poor.

All over Asia young people are becoming vulnerable to changes brought about by globalization and modernization: from being forced to work early in life to experiencing drastic changes in culture and values; from having fewer opportunities for education and personal development to being victims of society's ills. At the same time, however, the youth hold a certain strategic importance in effecting positive change. This has been witnessed on the many occasions when youth and students, in solidarity with other sectors of society, have mobilized their ranks to force governments to listen to and act on the people's demands.

Saoren (11) in the village of Kruos (Prov. Battambang, Northwest Cambodia).
©LWF/R. Karasch



ASYG 2000 is co-organized by five regional youth and student organizations in the Asian-Pacific region:

Asia Alliance of YMCAs (AAY)
Christian Conference of
Asia-Youth (CCA-Youth)
International Movement of
Catholic Students Asia-Pacific
(IMCS-AP)
International Young Christian
Students Asian Secretariat
(IYCS-Asia)
World Student Christian Federa-

Objectives

ASYG 2000, through different analytical tools and from a biblical-theological perspective, intends to:

1. Critically review the socio-economic development of the post-colonial period in Asia;
2. Initiate a process of participatory study on concerns related to development and globalization and their effects and impact on young people, the education system, and society in general;
3. Facilitate a consolidated awareness-raising campaign on these issues and concerns;
4. Enable youth and students from Asia and the Pacific to evolve a common understanding and analysis of the above-mentioned issues and their role in society, as well as to identify and develop alternative paradigms which promote fullness of life and to formulate concrete regional strategies;
5. Enable the participating students and youth movements in Asia to further strengthen ecumenical partnership and mutual sharing;
6. Enable the co-organizing movements and participants to come up with a clear follow-up plan to be implemented on regional, national and local levels.

Program content & schedule

Since April 1996, the representatives of these ecumenical groups have informally explored the possibility of co-organizing a gathering for the coming millennium. The first preparatory meeting was held in June 1997 when the core group

began working. To implement this project, a working group, comprised of one staff person and one youth from each organization has been formed to plan for participation at both the national and regional gatherings.

The ASYG 2000 has two phases:

Phase 1: The National Gatherings

Date: January 1999 to December 1999

The national movements of the five co-organizers are being encouraged to work together toward a national gathering in their own country. A coordinator has been invited by the ASYG 2000 Core Group in each country to facilitate the process. The national gatherings can focus on any objectives of ASYG 2000, which will then be reported on at the regional gathering.

Integrated rural
development
program
Battambang, LWS
Cambodia. The new
well is ready to
function!
©LWF/R.Karasch



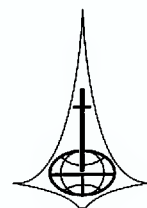
Phase 2: The Regional Gathering

Date: 21 - 28 January 2000

Place: Chiangmai, Thailand

Total number of participants: About 110 youth and students from all over the Asia-Pacific region will be invited. The participants will include those who have participated in the national gatherings or who have worked on the issues of globalization in their own country.

The LWF Youth Desk will be represented by three young people from the LWF member churches in India, Hong Kong and Malaysia. They will report on their experiences in the next issue of the Youth Magazine.



EUROPE

The European Lutheran Youth Pilgrimage Vadstena 2000

In August 2000, the Church of Sweden's Linköping diocese plans to host the first ever international pilgrimage for youth to the city of Vadstena. The LWF Youth Desk will participate in the planning of this event together with local organizers. Young people from all over Europe will gather at different places in Sweden to walk to Vadstena in small groups. After a three-day walk, all the groups will congregate in Vadstena. In order to make the pilgrimage accessible to as many young persons as possible, participation in Vadstena '00 will be kept inexpensive. Accommodation and food will be basic and simple. Accommodation, for example, will either be in tents or on school floors, but it will also be possible to stay in a hotel. The following activities will take place in Vadstena:

SERVICES AND EUCHARIST will be celebrated in the "meeting tent", the abbey and on every street corner in Vadstena. All countries will unite in music, prayer and communion.

BIBLE STUDIES with the theme "Friendship with God" will be led by invited guests.

MEETING PLACES - A coffee tent will be open all day. There will be a music corner where many international Christian musicians will assemble.

PILGRIMAGES - For those who wish to continue walking, one-day excursions around Vadstena will be offered.

YOUTH SQUARE - A place where we can manifest what young Lutherans want to do and could do for the future.

THEME DAY - On one of the days, seminars and lectures will be offered by invited guests and lecturers. The theme day will provide an opportunity for further study and inspiration for young people in the Lutheran church.

ANCHORITE¹ - An opportunity will be provided for those who wish to spend one day and night in solitude and silence. With specific literature, the Bible, a sleeping bag and a food basket, those who are interested may either live in a remote cottage, tent or on one of lake Vättern's small islands.

Outdoor activities such as sports and boat trips will also be offered.

"Where in our daily life, in our society, is there time for us alone or together with others, to stop and change direction, make changes and see where we are headed? On such a pilgrimage these questions come together in a melting-pot where one has time, where body and soul meet on a journey toward a goal, a journey not only

to Canterbury, but one that also reaches an inner goal and an inner journey. Being a Christian is a journey with Christ, from death to life, from disharmony to harmony, from despair to hope. We will gather to go on a pilgrimage to express the yearning that we have for a journey closer to ourselves, to find ourselves and give us direction. Together we will embark not only on an outward journey, but above all, on an inner journey, a way of thinking and living. In simplicity and fellowship, ever towards a goal, let God lead us on that journey." (From a booklet on Vadstena '00).

To be a pilgrim

- reflections from a Lutheran perspective

Every Christian is a pilgrim. In all Christian traditions we look upon Christian life as a passage from this world to heaven where God is all things. For a pilgrim there are four points of reference. On a pilgrim's path, a pilgrim first meets nature. Every walk in nature makes our relationship with creation clear. Who has made the flowers, the trees, the grass, the sky, the sun and heaven? A pilgrim reflects, thinks, prays and thanks God for what he/she meets in nature. All of nature is a gift from God. It is a gift which, in many ways, has been destroyed by humans. How can I as God's co-worker free nature from such bondage? How can I see myself as part of God's creation, a pre-

A pilgrim's attributes:

The cross is a comprehensive symbol of a pilgrim's outer and inner wandering, the identity badge showing his/her affiliation.

The staff is a symbol of guidance, a support throughout life's journey.

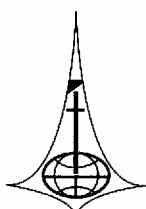
The hat is a symbol of protection against the elements, but also a prayer and meditation hat.

The knapsack is a symbol of light-heartedness and represents all that has been learned during while wandering.

The shoes are a symbol of imitating Christ, of walking in Jesus' footsteps, of following Christ, the great pilgrim.

The tent is a symbol of testimony, a symbol of the wandering church's tabernacle.

¹ A person who lives alone and apart from society for religious meditation.





Preparatory
group for
Vadstena
Pilgrimage.
©LWF/O.
Prostrednik

cious part that God wants me to preserve and use for His purpose?

Secondly, a pilgrim meets with his/her neighbor. Walking together with other pilgrims makes his/her meeting natural. Even if a pilgrim walks alone, the faces of his/her neighbors will always be present. A pilgrim cannot avoid other human beings. Such a meeting may be very personal. For some, it is mostly a meeting of thanksgiving for what God has given us through our neighbors. For many, it is a meeting that soon fills the pilgrim's heart with guilt. There is so much I could have done, and did not do, so much I did and should not have done. A pilgrim can throw off this guilt, but it will reappear again and again. In the end, his/her guilt will force a pilgrim to utter the *Kyrie eleison*, the cry for forgiveness and the promise of a new life.

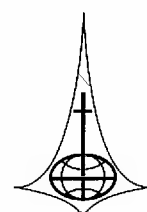
Thirdly, the pilgrim meets God. You might say the pilgrim meets God right from the start - and this is, of course, true; in all instances God is present. But a pilgrimage helps concentration. While walking a pilgrim is confronted with God. He/she asks: What is my relation to God? Do I want to be a servant of God? Do I want to live the life God has created for me? Do I dare pray for the life that God wants for me? And, is God only the close and forgiving God? Is God also the distant God who holds heaven and earth in his hands? Does God get angry? Can He take revenge? What is my own understanding of God and what is God really? Of course, we can only have ideas about God but do our ideas reflect the true God or do they reflect only our own favorite thoughts? Is there really a merciful God just for me?

Ultimately, a pilgrim meets himself or herself face to face. This may be the hardest meeting of all

and the most difficult. We are in the habit of avoiding meeting with ourselves and are often expert in finding ways not to confront ourselves as we really are. The pilgrimage helps. Walking literally often causes some pain. The body certainly feels tired. And so we face ourselves head-on. There is nowhere else to go. It is a meeting with the "ego." Who am I? Everyone has a hidden side they do not want to examine. For many, if not all of us, there are sides of ourselves we do not even know about. The pilgrimage may help us to examine one of these sides and to see ourselves from a new perspective. We will certainly find goodwill attached to all sides, the will to make the best of everything. But we also risk finding a brutal selfishness that we do not want to see. This meeting with ourselves will help us not only to utter a new *Kyrie eleison*, but also to start believing in God's mercy. Without a merciful God there is neither future nor heaven.

As you can see, this pilgrimage is a true walk through death toward resurrection. It is a walk we could take together with Martin Luther learning from him at every step.

However, for most of us Lutherans pilgrimages belong to the past. It is a historical fact that our reformer, Martin Luther, clearly felt that pilgrimages should be forbidden, that pilgrimages were not only unnecessary, but also negative in themselves. Luther's harsh judgement can only be attributed to widespread practices of those days. Pilgrimages had turned into something different and were actually made for other than their original purpose. Making a pilgrimage was seen to be of spiritual merit. In the medieval doctrine of merits, pilgrimages played a certain role. Such abuse was condemned by Luther. But the question of whether we should throw away "the child





Vadstena
©LWF/O.
Prostredník

The Prayer of Saint Bridget...

...på Svenska:

Herre, visa mig din väg
och gör mig villig
att vandra den.

...in English:

Lord, show me your way
and make me willing
to follow it.

...auf Deutsch:

Herr, weise mir den Weg
und mache mich willig,

with the bathwater?" *"Abusus tollit usus"* is also quoted by our reformers. There is a true path of pilgrimage that has nothing to do with the old doctrine of merit, but that is clearly more in line with Luther's main thinking.

The first Christians were "on the way." They were even called "the Way" - the inner way which every Christian has to walk through all valleys, all black holes, all tribulations towards the resurrection.

The very early Christians began to walk the path literally, the path toward a holy place. From the beginning it meant walking to the places where Jesus lived, where he taught, where he performed his miracles, and, above all, where he died and was resurrected by God.

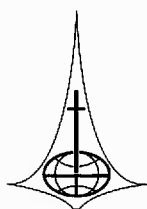
Christians soon went to the places where the apostles had lived, worked and died. And also to other places where holy men and women had spent their lives.

We do not intend to explain the whole history of pilgrimages here. It is a long story, filled with traditions that sometimes may appear strange to us Lutherans. Therefore, let us create our own tradition. While considering the past, we will establish pilgrimages that today help us most in finding nature, our neighbor, God and ourselves.

General Information on Vadstena

Vadstena, Sweden, is situated in a bay on the east shore of Lake Vättern. Vadstena is famous for its abbey, which was founded by St. Bridget and dates back to the 1360s. St. Bridget is the greatest personality of the Swedish Middle Ages. Through her many revelations, from God, she gained the reputation of being holy, which led to her canonization in 1391. From 1350 until her death on 23 July 1373 she lived in Rome. After her death, St. Bridget's mortal remains were brought home to Vadstena. As her reputation as a saint quickly spread, the abbey became famous and the flow of pilgrims ever since has meant a lot to the town of Vadstena.

The church of the abbey has been Vadstena's parish church since 1829. It is one of Sweden's most prominent medieval church buildings and is visited by thousands of tourists and pilgrims from all over Europe. In 1989 Pope John Paul II paid a visit to the church during his visit to Scandinavia. The memory of St. Bridget is kept alive not least by the Societas Sanctae Birgittae that holds its general chapter every year around the day of the saint's death.





Turning Point 2000

An International Lutheran Youth Evangelism Conference

Sydney Australia

24-30 January 2000

"New directions for reaching youth for Jesus"

Australia is a nation of about 18 million people found in the Southern Hemisphere below Asia, the largest western nation in the region. It is a country that has known European settlement for just over 200 years, but which boasts the far more ancient history of its original inhabitants, the Aboriginal people.

Australia's population lives predominantly along the eastern coastline where its largest cities lie. The farther west you go the more the land becomes uninhabitable. In fact, about 60 percent of Australia's landmass are uninhabitable desert. Spiritually, Australia could be described in similar terms. It is considered a pagan nation with only about 5 percent of the population being actively involved in any religion. There is, however, a new awareness of spiritual issues developing among Australian people. About 95 percent of Australians actually say that they believe there is a God, but that they just do not know exactly who he is and, consequently, do not trust him. It is true, though that recent generations are searching for a deeper, spiritual truth as never before. The younger generations in Australia are particularly concerned. They have been forced to reconcile themselves to enormous issues that no answer thrown up by a materialistic and atheistic society has been able to satisfy. Issues such as a very high youth suicide rate (one of the highest in the world), the recognition and conse-

quences of atrocities carried out against the Aboriginal people, the breakdown of families and increase of mental illness in adolescents. Young people, once again, have turned toward the heavens to seek an answer to their many unanswered questions.

Turning Point 2000

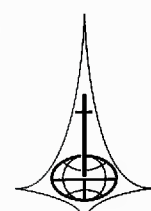
It is within this context that we are planning to hold a Christian youth conference aimed at equipping and encouraging young people to be evangelists, to go out and answer the question of spiritual truth with the only real answer – the gospel of Jesus Christ.

We are inviting people from around the world to share this goal with us, as we are aware that we are not alone with our concern. We expect more than 300 people to attend *Turning Point 2000* in both a celebration of God's calling of us to be his representatives on earth and in being challenged and equipped to go out in his power and turn this world upside down for him. It will also be an opportunity for Lutheran youth and youth ministry leaders to share fellowship, network and encourage one another.

The conference will be held in Sydney from 24–30 January 2000 at the picturesque Merroo Conference Centre on the outskirts of the city. The program includes international speakers: Dick Hardel (director, Augsburg Youth and Family Institute, Minnesota, USA) and Marva Dawn (renowned Christian author and key speaker), host of some of the best known speakers on evangelism and ministry in Australia.

Sydney

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"Esperando el 2000":

Una visión desde la Juventud Latinoamericana

Lucas Veira Sand,

Argentina

Pocos días quedan ya para lo que se ha dado en llamar "el nuevo milenio", y se nos informa cotidianamente de diversas preparativos para festejos y conmemoraciones en muy disímiles partes del mundo. Desde los medios de comunicación, instituciones e incluso el trato cotidiano nos enteramos de eventos o sucesos relacionados con esta fecha, que van desde la vuelta al mundo de un Concorde que recorrerá varios países para celebrar tantas veces como sea posible la llegada del año de número exacto, pasando por los preparativos en las grandes ciudades mientras aumenta la marginalidad, hasta los anuncios casi metaapocalípticos de sectas y espacios sociales que anuncian el fin de los días a plazo fijo (y demasiado cercano).



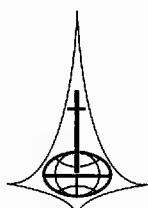
Es muy usual que se sostenga en varios sectores, explícita o implícitamente, el advenimiento de un mundo desarrollado y megatecnológico bastante homogéneo como para pensar en la posibilidad de parias sociales que afectaron a los siglos del milenio que finaliza en este nueva etapa de tecnología y felicidad. Y a la par esa sensación que a veces nos invade relativa a que todo pudiera cambiar en el transcurso de la noche a la mañana que traspase los umbrales alcanzando tan preciada fecha. Luego reflexionamos y notamos que el número 2000 – con el cual papá y mamá en la humanidad regida por determinado calendario han llamado al bebé año que pronto comenzará marcando "una nueva vida para este planeta" – no es más que una mera abstracción cuantitativa de tiempo que convoca a nuestra atención por su magnitud

numérica más o menos exacta decimalmente. Ahora bien, está claro que dicha fecha no porta necesariamente esos atributos mágicos que muchas veces le otorgamos, y que la historia de los seres humanos se guía por procesos – aunque contengan hechos coyunturales muy agudos – más que por números "redondos"; sin embargo, como cristianos, conmemoramos esa fecha en algo que llamamos *jubileo*, el cual implica tanto una reflexión acerca de que se hizo y que hicimos en tanto iglesia, así como un compromiso hacia el presente y el futuro. Es fundamental, en consecuencia, tener como punto de referencia el nacimiento del cristianismo y el espíritu que lo fue acompañando: la liberación por Cristo y la misión de allí en más de quienes se convierten en sus discípulos. Este mensaje de libertad, en cuanto luteranos, nos convoca no solo a aguardar la venida del reino, sino también a comprometernos seria y activamente con lo que ocurre (y nos ocurre, y colaboramos a que ocurre) en tanto comunidad o sociedad. A partir de esto, en cuanto jóvenes de Latinoamérica, hay tópicos que de una u otra manera nos convocan.

"En Cristo – llamados/das a dar testimonio" fue el lema de la IX Asamblea de la Federación Luterana Mundial de 1997 en Hong Kong, expresando tanto una interpelación como la asunción de un compromiso; uno de los lemas de la juventud en dicha Asamblea lo fue: "Porque no podemos dejar de decir lo que hemos visto y oído (Hechos 4:20)". Justamente, porque estamos llamados a transmitir y compartir aquello que nos ha llegado, asumimos el compromiso como cristianos (y como luteranos) de dar testimonio; esto es, tanto asumir una responsabilidad de denuncia activa sobre aquello que nos somete a nosotros o a nuestros semejantes, como expresar la proclama de un mensaje de esperanza, salvación y liberación en Cristo.

Es tema de importancia estructural en nuestros países de América Latina la situación indignante de una deuda externa que se incrementa en forma geométrica, acarreando graves problemas sociales sobre los cuales no hay políticas activas como correlato de severos ajustes, que, por los modos de gobernarse nuestros estados y las presiones de los organismos internacionales, siempre terminan atañendo a cuestiones decisivas y primordiales para la supervivencia humana. Está claro que "vida" para los cristianos no involucra solo los aspectos materiales sino también espirituales, pero también es bastante sencillo percibir que sin la atención de las ne-

Painting the 2000 poster for the Youth Presentation about the Vision for the "LWF 2000 and beyond".
©LWF/K.Ward.



cesidades biológicas mínimas (es ya muy fuerte tener que reducir el foco de la atención a lo indispensable para el "bios") lo cual conlleva también un desprecio que afecta severamente la dignidad humana, resulta esperable encontrar algún de daño radical sobre la creación de Dios, como lo somos las criaturas humanas – tanto así también los ambientes y ecosistemas naturales, afectados por una deforestación y perjuicio en escalada, muy particular en nuestras regiones.

Es imprescindible como mínimo una condonación de estas deudas, ya que además de ser usurarias (cuanto más se paga más se debe, y luego vienen nuevas renegociaciones) podemos considerar que ellas ya han sido pagadas con creces (no solo por los aspectos monetarios de la deuda misma, sino por todo el "flujo" histórico de bienes de nuestra región latinoamericana hacia lugares del llamado primer mundo), además de que quienes sufren sus consecuencias de marginalidad y carencia no fueron consultados ni han sido beneficiados por los compromisos de dicha deuda. A este respecto, ya existen en la región concertaciones cristianas encargadas de estudiar el tema y exigir la condonación para el jubileo – lo cual es bíblico, como en Levítico 25 – en este caso para el 2000, en las cuales ha habido una importante participación juvenil. Recordemos también que esta propuesta no se basa en el no pago, sino más bien en el *no cobro*, que permita construir nuevas relaciones sociales y renovar las esperanzas en el proyecto de vida al que nos invita Dios, y con el cual tamañas deudas no se corresponden al multiplicar constreñimientos sobre cuestiones humanas inmanentes, como la salud.

Anhelamos un mundo donde, así como parecen ir debilitándose las diferencias entre Este y Oeste con la caída del muro de Berlín y la revolución en las comunicaciones, también deje de acrecentarse – para luego desaparecer – la abrumante brecha en marginalidad que separa al Norte del Sur. Si bien notamos con alegría lo positivo de esta globalización, con algún mayor grado de tolerancia (palabra poco feliz; ojalá pudiéramos hablar de "aceptación") de los matices culturales y de raza, no ocurre lo mismo con la pobreza (material, que también se relaciona con la espiritual) la cual deviene marginal en la medida en que sufre una fuerte segregación, y que aumenta en base a un creciente desempleo y una "mercantilización" de valores que atañen a la esencia humana. De la misma

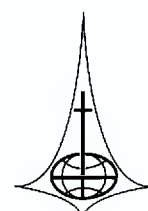
manera, entonces, en que queremos un mundo donde las discrepancias desaparezcan aunque respetando las idiosincrasias culturales (relación y no mimetización), apreciamos también una iglesia que sea una como el cuerpo de Cristo, rica en su diversidad, y con un mensaje que tenga asidero en las realidades espirituales y contextuales de las comunidades.

Otro tópico fundamental en este momento vital de *á pres coup* (encontrar sentido retroactivamente) lo encarnan cuestiones relativas al género. En nuestras regiones son aún pasibles de ser encontradas notables diferencias de trato, integración y posibilidades que integran esquemas, conscientes o inconscientes, que reproducen aspectos segregativos hacia (fundamentalmente, pero no solo) la mujer y ni que hablar si son jóvenes. Es imprescindible considerar que aquello relacionado con el



cuerpo y la sexualidad en lo concerniente a su asunción de libertad y ejercicio, es un don de Dios y no un aspecto pecaminoso. Es ya bastante notable que como iglesias que nos decimos inclusivas, debamos aún luchar por tratar y aclarar estos aspectos, cuando en muchos sectores sociales ya se están trabajando (incluso con grandes avances) temáticas relacionadas con lo que se ha dado en llamar *el tercer sexo*. Desde la juventud de las iglesias luteranas también tomamos estas cuestiones como muy pertinentes para la tarea que involucra distintas áreas. Este tipo de olvidos o apartamientos también han sido moneda corriente en lo relacionado con la juventud; las políticas sociales y/o de estado en nuestros países poco y nada han considerado a ese respecto. En nuestras iglesias estamos tratando de que el ejercicio de las

Project visitation
in the "favelas"
around Recife.
©LWF/M.Egli.



International Youth Gathering

in Hanover during EXPO 2000

1.6-31.10, 2000

Maschsee/Hanover

The Idea

One thousand young people from all over the world will find rather unusual overnight accommodation at the "Maschsee" in Hanover during the EXPO 2000. This calls for creativity. Individual visitors and groups may build their own "homes" themselves. Already existing "cabins" may be reconstructed over and over again. Thus, new "town districts" come into being.

There are various "places" with "central institutions" such as a "town hall", stages for cultural events or talk shows, cafés, bistros, ... simply, a town atmosphere. Here you can get lots of ideas and information, all kinds of practical help and make interesting acquaintances in a nice, hospitable setting.

And in the center of the city,
there is a church...

With an open concept, we want to show publicly that we as young Christians are able to convey an attractive attitude toward life, and are confident and competent to address young people's questions about the future.

The Place

The sports park at the "Maschsee" is one of Hanover's favorite and most beautiful places in the immediate vicinity of the city center.

The Offers

Church services, meditation, quiet rooms, accommodation in temporary buildings, culture, games and sports, reflection on questions about the future, advice, information, service...

The Organizers

The aej – Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Evangelischen Jugend in Deutschland
The Federation of Protestant Youth is a federation of Protestant Christian youth organizations in Germany and covers the youth work of established Protestant churches in twenty-four "Länder" (regions) of Germany, the Free Churches as well as some Christian youth associations such as the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) and the Verband Christlicher Pfadfinder (Association of Christian Scouts). Eleven other partner organizations also belong to the aej.



...in cooperation with the city of Hanover
The international youth gathering is part of the regional EXPO project "The city as a social lebensraum" and is intended to encourage meetings between local youth from Hanover and young EXPO visitors.

Further information:

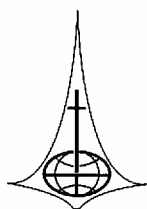
aej-Bundesgeschäftsstelle

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www.evangelische-jugend/expo-jugendtreff.de



Youth Camp 2000

An Ecumenical Project

On the occasion of the World Exhibition
EXPO 2000 in Germany

The Federation of Protestant Youth in the Federal Republic of Germany (aej) sees the world exhibition in Germany as a welcome opportunity for international ecumenical youth work. As part of the worldwide Christian family, we believe we should make a contribution to the coming millennium on the issues addressed at the exhibition under the title "Humankind, Nature, Technology".

In cooperation with the German Catholic Youth Association and with the support of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Hildesheim, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hanover and the city of Hildesheim, see their role as hosts in encouraging young people from all over the world to address these challenges and make their own contributions. We will do this deliberately within an ecumenical framework to emphasize our common ground as Christians.

Within this cooperation, we are planning a youth camp for the summer months of July and August 2000, designed to cater to the basic needs of youth groups from all over the world, who are participating in the EXPO through discussions on the

above topics. We intend to place particular emphasis on the importance of creating the right atmosphere to support partnerships between groups from Germany and abroad with the aim of establishing new partnerships and contacts.

Given the global dimension of the project we would welcome co-workers from abroad to make up an international ecumenical team. Your ideas, support and also your prayers would be highly appreciated.

Please contact our office where Klaus Pohl and Stefan Riepe will provide you with further information:

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EXPO2000 HANNOVER

Die Weltausstellung
1. Juni - 31. Oktober 2000
in Deutschland



The Jubilee 2000

Jubilee 2000, USA

Part of a worldwide movement to cancel the crushing international debt of impoverished countries by the new millennium.

I called long ago for the cancellation of the crippling debt we have had to bear for so long... There are others who have joined their voices in this campaign. There is something called Jubilee 2000. We ask our friends who have stood by us in the dark days of oppression and injustice. This is the new moral crusade to have the debt canceled following the biblical principle of Jubilee. Basically, this principle says everything belongs to God; all debts and mortgages must be canceled in the Jubilee Year to give the debtors a chance to make a new beginning.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu in a speech to the General Assembly of the All Africa Conference of Churches, October 1997

This "new moral crusade," as Archbishop Tutu calls the Jubilee 2000 campaign, is a worldwide movement to cancel the crushing international debt of poor countries. Why is this crusade so important?

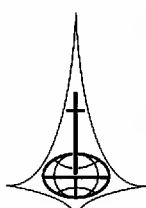
Poor countries owe a vast amount of money to rich nations and international financial institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. For developing countries as a whole this debt is over USD 2 trillion. Most of it is owed by "middle-income" developing countries. But some of the lowest-income countries in the world are also heavily indebted, owing around USD 250 billion.

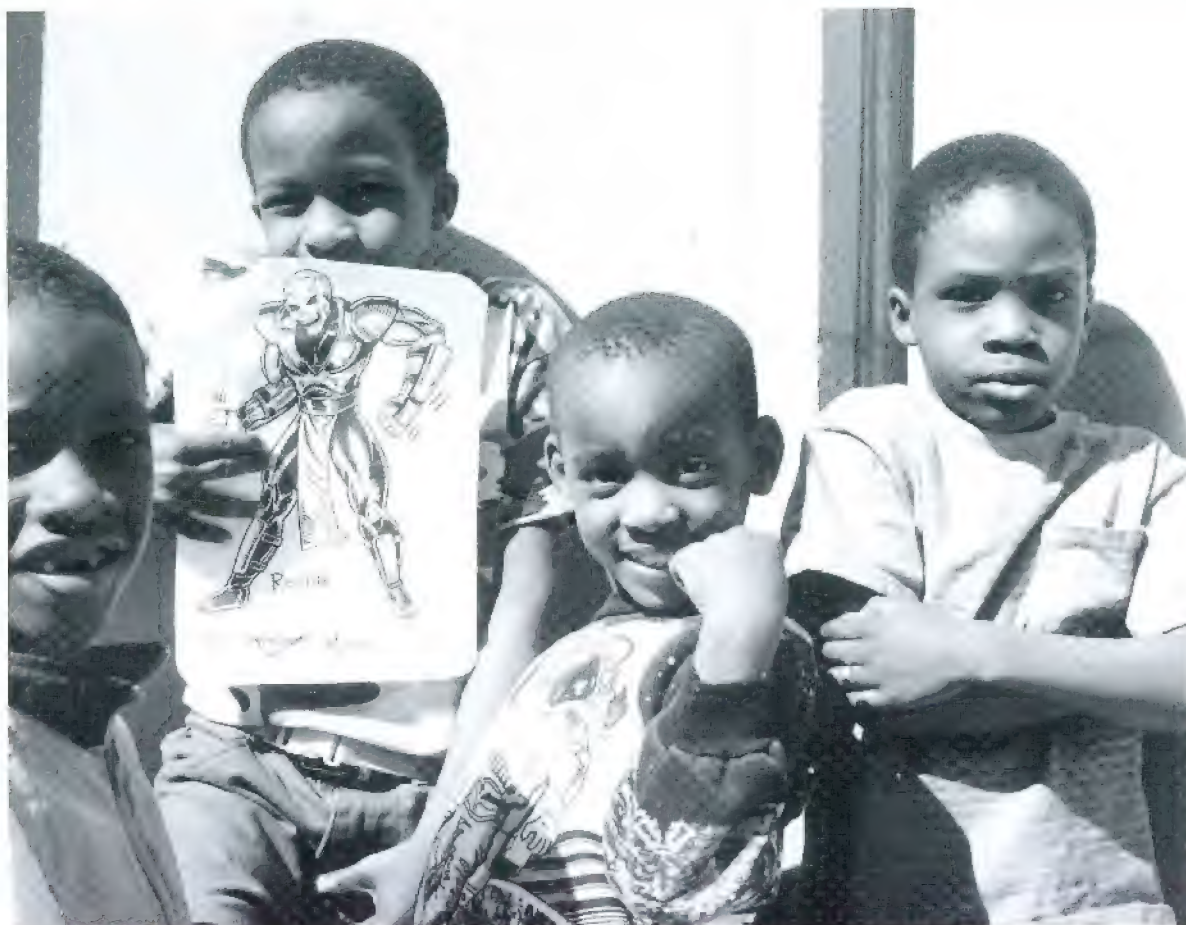
Hundreds of millions of people living in poverty in low and middle-income countries alike are paying the price for their countries' enormous international debt. Ordinary people did not benefit from many of the loans that gave rise to this debt. Yet they bear the principal burden of repayment. Without major debt reduction, poor countries are trapped, making unending interest payments on their debts. This requires them continuously to divert large amounts of scarce resources from health care, education and food security. The debt burden inhibits the social and economic development that is needed to lift people out of poverty.

The millennial year 2000 is the target date to bring about major debt relief for the world's poorest countries. National campaigns to accomplish this goal currently exist, for example, in countries such as England, Scotland, Canada, the Philippines, Australia, Ireland, Austria, Germany, Sweden, South Africa and the United States. All call for eliminating the unpayable debt of the poorest countries by the year 2000, without conditions that will further harm people living in poverty or the environment. The international scope of this movement means that advocacy efforts can be coordinated throughout the world for maximum effectiveness.

The Jubilee 2000 movement draws its inspiration from the book of Leviticus in the Hebrew Scriptures, which describes a Year of Jubilee every fifty years. In the Jubilee Year, social inequalities

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Aachen





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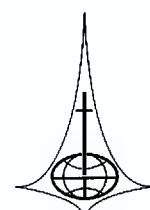
are rectified: slaves are freed, land is returned to its original owners, and debts are canceled. Debt cancellation has meaning especially for many groups concerned about greater global fairness: some of the poorest countries in the world have been struggling with a debt burden since 1982. While there is plenty of blame to go around - irresponsible creditors, corrupt borrowers - the bottom line is that governments of impoverished countries are servicing their debts by diverting their limited resources from meeting the basic needs of their people.

It is quite clear why impoverished countries both favor and desperately need debt relief. To end the debt burden would allow whole peoples to begin afresh, with wisdom gained from bad experience. But why would creditors also benefit from a serious effort to resolve this debilitating global dilemma? The primary benefit is moral. It troubles our conscience, as citizens of rich countries, that people living in misery in other parts of the world have to send us money for debt repayment that they need for their own survival. When foreign debt, however incurred, so drains the economic resources of a people that all hope of a better future is fore-

closed, it is time to admit the inhumanity of maintaining the fiction of repayment. Although the debt owed by the poorest countries is enormous to them, the amounts are small in relation to the wealth of rich nations.

Because the debt of poor countries is small in comparison to the developed economies, the positive impact of cancellation for rich countries may not be large, but practical benefits do exist. The extraordinary buildup of debt and the imposition of structural adjustment austerity programs can create political instability. By helping perpetuate poverty and impeding economic development, indebtedness can lead to social strife, government repression and civil war. Less misery and greater political stability would mean, for example, that development aid could be utilized more effectively. Refugee flows might decrease. The potential for humanitarian emergencies leading the wealthy nations to consider an armed intervention - as in Somalia - or massive financial aid might be reduced.

In the Jubilee Year, social inequalities are rectified: slaves are freed, land is returned to original owners, and debts are canceled.





XV World Youth day 2000

Youth Jubilee

His Holiness
Johannes
Paulus II
celebrating
the Holy Mass
at the old
town of
Uppsala.
©T. Sandstedt

In December 1998, the Pontifical Council for the Laity along with the Italian Committee for the World Youth Day 2000 (ICWYD) organized the first preparatory meeting for the XV World Youth Day. The following is the general outline and the practical organization of World Youth Day 2000, based on the various contributions given during the preparatory meeting and on some new elements added afterwards.

The theme, chosen by the Holy Father, will be, "And the Word became flesh and lived among us" (John 1:14). In the context of the Great Jubilee, the mystery of the incarnation of the Word, focal point of human history, is announced at the threshold of the third millennium. This gives the XV World Youth Day some particular characteristics. First of all, it will include the essential components of Jubilee: the pilgrimage, the visit to the tombs of Peter and Paul, the profession of faith. Moreover, the hosting place for this event is Rome, a symbolic city: the living memories of the Apostles and early martyrs will render the experience of the pilgrimage particularly intense. Finally, this time the Pope himself and the Church of Rome will welcome the young people "at home", whereas on previous occasions the young people welcomed the Pope elsewhere.

Program of Celebrations

The XV World Youth Day will start officially with the welcoming of the youth in St. Peter's Square on Tuesday, 15 August, 2000. The focal point of this world youth day will be the "Jubilee Pilgrimage" to St. Peter's tomb and the meeting with the Holy Father.

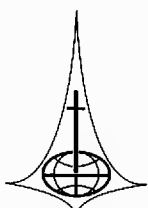
As it is expected that already from 15-19 August there will be hundreds of thousands of young people in Rome, they will be divided into three major subgroups which will carry on independent activities during the "triduum" (August 16, 17, 18). For every group, one day will be reserved for the Jubilee Pilgrimage. This will begin in Via della Conciliazione, include passing through the Holy Door, and conclude with a stop inside the Vatican Basilica at the "Altar of the Confession", while a multilingual Jubilee catechesis is given along the way. The day of the "Jubilee Pilgrimage" will also have a penitential dimension.

On the Saturday morning, all the groups will gather at the Campus of the Tor Vergata University, where the vigil and the Eucharistic celebration will be presided over by the Holy Father.



In addition to the pilgrimage, there will be various activities with the purpose of sharing artistic, religious and spiritual experiences of the faith and life of young people from all over the world. Such activities will include: vigils, exhibitions, concerts, recitals, theater presentations, and so forth.

As on previous world youth days, young people from other denominations will be cordially welcome.



The ELYC

The European Lutheran Youth Consultation

Strasbourg, France, 22-26 May 1999

European Lutheran youth envision closer cooperation among churches.

Participants at the European Lutheran Youth Consultation (ELYC) held from 22 to 26 May 1999 in Strasbourg, France, urged church leaders in the region to give special priority to the creation of possibilities "for young people to be witnesses of Christ in an integrated and multi-cultural Europe." According to a report summarizing issues that emerged at the meeting, the consultation was attended by 55 participants from 24 countries, comprised of 36 young people from the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) member churches in Europe and invited guests. Under the theme: "For we cannot stop speaking of what we ourselves have seen and heard," different topics were discussed. These included 'Christian Youth Work in the Context of Religious Plurality and Multicultural Society', 'European Integration and Church' and 'Mission Outreach Among Youth Today' (Iwi, May/June 1999)

Message of the European Lutheran Youth Consultation (ELYC)

Introduction

1. The European Lutheran Youth Consultation took place in Strasbourg, France, May 22-26, 1999. Participants were 36 young people representing Lutheran World Federation (LWF) member churches in Europe, two guests from the regions of Asia and Africa, and five ecumenical guests nominated by the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) and the Ecumenical Youth Council in Europe (EYCE). The total number of participants, including the resource persons and LWF staff, was 55, coming from 24 countries.

2. The theme of the consultation was taken from the book of Acts 4: 20: "For we cannot keep from speaking about what we have seen and heard." Different topics were explored in the light of this theme: Mission Outreach Among Youth Today, Leadership Training for Young People, Christian Youth Work in the Context of Religious Plurality and Multicultural Society, Networking Among Lutheran Youth in Europe, and European Integration and Church. Participants were also introduced to youth work in the Lutheran churches in Africa and Asia, and to the youth pilgrimage to Vadstena, Sweden, in the year 2000.

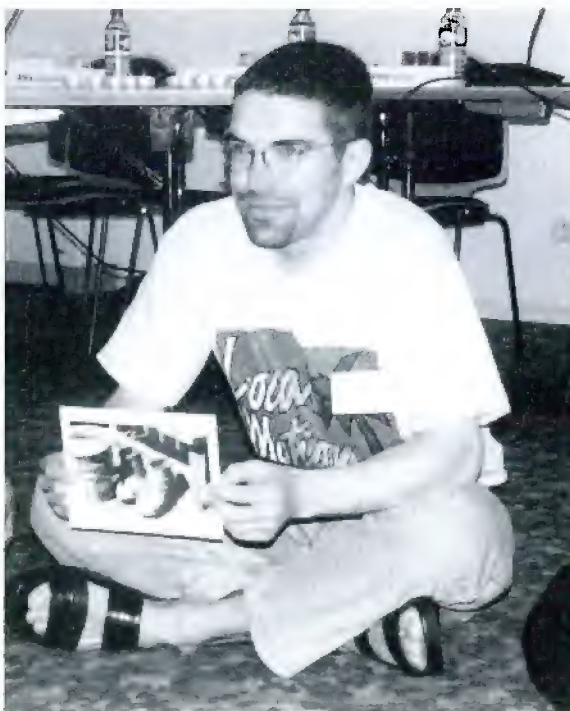
Findings

3. We have different understandings of the term mission, which are clearly based upon our different backgrounds and different experiences. Opinions range from the view that mission is not necessarily a process leading to conversion to Christ, but living a life that Jesus showed us, to understanding mission as the active practice of converting people to Christ. Another perception of the term involved mission as service and work for holistic growth of life in community and the whole creation. Mission can also be silent, just living out the consequences of being claimed by Christ.

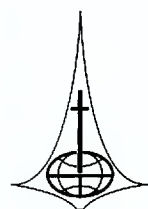
Therefore mission must be three-dimensional: towards God, towards our neighbors and towards one's own spiritual awareness. Mission does not happen without the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives as a plan of God.

4. Our churches face different challenges when it comes to training young people in leadership. Training of volunteers for youth work on national and local levels is seen as the most crucial one, especially in Eastern Europe. This training should, along with general leadership skills, develop also more specific Christian leadership qualities.

The participants of ELYC call on the LWF to provide consultative services on the national and subregional levels as well as to offer leadership training programs on regional level.



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5. When discussing the Christian Youth Work in the Context of Religious Plurality and Multicultural Society, we focused on Christian-Muslim relations. We asked ourselves, how does our faith in Jesus Christ motivate us to promote understanding and tolerance within a multicultural society. We recognize that young Lutherans and Muslims can learn much in dialogue with each other. We must engage in personal dialogue and work towards a social harmony between different groups within our society.

6. We find it very important that a network be established among young Lutherans in Europe. Concrete forms of networking were discussed (see group report). While we recognize the different situations in our churches and subregions concerning the needs of closer cooperation, we see the significance of networking both within and between subregions of Europe.

7. As a step toward increased cooperation between Lutherans among themselves and between Lutherans and other confessional families, and as a response to the proposal made by the guests from WARC, the following proposal was made and approved: "The ELYC welcomes the proposal of a joint European Youth Consultation between LWF and WARC and suggests that the LWF and WARC act as partners in the organization of the Consultation, so that an equal number of participants can take part in it."

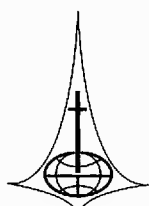
8. As young Lutherans our vision of integrated Europe lies mainly in a more active engagement of the churches and Christian individuals in holding up the Christian values of the integrity of creation, equality, justice, peace and human rights. Identities of culture, language and faith should be respected. In the process of the integration of Europe, the church should advocate for the voiceless, be it an ethnic or other oppressed minority.

9. We urge the churches to actively participate in lasting peace efforts in the Balkans with the perspective of reconstructing societies which have suffered due to war. Special efforts must be made to support the development of youth work in order to promote democratic security, peace and human rights in the Balkans.

Conclusion

10. Young Lutherans in Europe cannot keep from speaking of what they have seen and heard. We therefore conclude that we envision closer cooperation among our churches on issues that were presented at the ELYC in Strasbourg, which we find to be of major importance for all young people.

11. Thus we encourage the leaders of our churches to give special priority to the creation of the possibility for young people to be witnesses of Jesus Christ in an integrated and multicultural Europe.



Children of the Reformation

in Times of Society Transformation

1. Introduction

The Pre-Council Youth Workshop took place in Svätý Jur near Bratislava in the Slovak Republic, 19-21 June 1999. The participants included nine stewards representing member churches from central-eastern Europe, four Council members from central-western Europe, the Nordic countries, Asia and Latin America, one ecumenical guest from the World Council of Churches (WCC) and three staff from the Lutheran World Federation, including the current youth interns from Asia and Africa.

2. Theme

The theme of the workshop was: *"Children of the Reformation in Times of Society Transformation."* Bishop Julius Filo provided reflection on the theme as well as a presentation on the host church, the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in the Slovak Republic. The Rev. Dr. Paul Hinlicky presented a paper on the theme of the workshop and encouraged the youth to be changed in Jesus Christ so that our churches will become genuine communities of mutual love. The participants were invited to talk on this subject in relation to their own countries or regions. The ecumenical guest spoke about the WCC's stewards program.

3. Findings

Although told with different accents, the stories revealed the same problems, e.g. the generation gap, and secularization. During the past ten years eastern Europe has experienced many social changes. As a church we can neither ignore them nor find satisfaction with the situation we have inherited. For many people, it means a search for new values or even a new identity. What is inherited is not always negative. It is not wise to destroy old values because they might be needed as bridges to the future. At the same time we realize that churches are under the illusion that they remain unaffected by social change. The reformers, however, rediscovered in the Bible not the epiphany of some fixed and immutable order but the voice of one who promises to make all things new through Jesus Christ.

4.

After years of difficulty before 1989, youth work is now alive and functioning well in eastern Europe, a major pillar being Bible studies and others being various ways of meeting up with others, e.g. in youth camps.

5. Reactions

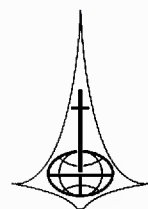
At the end of the workshop the participants were asked to write something about their experience. Especially those attending an ecumenical meeting for the first time said they found it stimulating, enriching and motivating to meet and work with people from other countries. A common opinion was that we were all reassured to hear that we all encountered the same problems, e.g. not having enough qualified youth leaders. People said they felt united and comfortable with one another.

6. Conclusion

Workshops like these are important not only for building networks, but also for facilitating a feeling of community or "communio". Wherever we as youth may be, we all face the same problems. We can look to each other for help, for which cooperation and a network between the churches is helpful.



The young people of ELCIR travelling in the parishes in Carelia with the deacon Aleksei Uimonen
©LWF/T. Paas



Varietas Delectat

Balázs Sággy, Hungary

Experiencing the unity of Pentecost at an international Christian conference.

Once upon a time a young Hungarian theology student set out to explore the beautiful town of Bratislava. As he reached his desired destination he hopped into a taxi to get to the nearby Svätý Jur where he was to take part in a youth conference.

I was a little bit disappointed by the sign on the side of the building which said *Agapé Centre*, my designated residence containing a Christian hostel, the Lutheran chapel and the pastor's office – let me tell you why.

It was two o'clock in the morning when I tried to get inside, but nobody came to answer the door, no matter how hard I pushed the doorbell. I suspected it was turned off. I looked for some help but after a number of failed attempts, I finally gave up. But then, God sent me four of his angels

disguised as young hooligans. They were more than willing to show me to a phone box – actually just a phone hanging on the wall – from which they called the local pastor for me. After a few minutes I gained entrance to the building. The complications that surrounded my arrival determined my attitude. In the following days I felt God's lead in overcoming problems of language and culture. The creative force of this experience gave me strength throughout the conference. A Latin proverb says '*Varietas delectat*' (Variety is delicious) - this thought set the path for my basic impression of the Pre-Council Youth Workshop in Svätý Jur which took place 19-21 June 1999. The participants were young people invited as stewards, Council members representing youth and some LWF staff from various countries – the Slovak Republic, Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Denmark, India, Colombia, the Netherlands, Romania, Liberia, Slovenia and Hungary. Indeed, there was a variety of colors both on the outside and inside which can only be expressed with that same proverb. In the workshop, whose theme was "Children of the Reformation in Times of Society Transformation" we dealt with Lutheran youth work in the period after the socio-political changes in eastern Europe. We also had a chance to see how church ministry is carried out in countries of other continents. An especially interesting and enriching experience was to realize that in spite of great geographical distances and social and political differences, we had many problems in common. In his lecture, the Rev. Dr. Paul Hinlicky, in a unique approach, emphasized change and an energetic revival of faith. According to his vision, these are the requisite conditions for authentic and effective ministry of the Church in our dynamically changing world.

The exchange of opinions and experiences started in the conference hall of the *Agapé Centre* and continued in one of the local pubs, where the *Varietas Delectat*-feeling reached its peak when everyone sang his/her favorite folk song. Our initially formal relationship grew into one of friendship.

After that introduction, we arrived in Bratislava a few days later where the LWF's annual Council Meeting took place 22-29 June in the prestigious Hotel Forum. I was invited as a steward responsible for photocopying and distributing documents and earphones. Sometimes I had to do more complicated tasks as well, such as buying a hat for one of the participants who had an eye problem. Overall, my co-workers and I were



Roland's Fountain
at the Main Square
in Bratislava
©LWF/T. Gulán



LWF Council
Meeting, Bratislava,
21-29 June 1999.
Left to right: LWF
President, Christian
Krause and LWF
General Secretary,
Dr Ishmael Noko.
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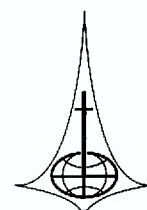
there to make the work of the organizer, LWF administrative staff, easier. To do this we needed a lot of patience, persistence, humility and sometimes inventiveness. Not for a moment did I feel the job was a nuisance. I received encouragement and positive feedback from the participants that my work was highly appreciated. One morning, for example, one of the Council members called me over and, with a smile on her face, she said, "It's great to have you here. I appreciate your wonderful work."

Besides my job, I had plenty of time to talk with the delegates of churches from all over the world – the *Varietas Delectat* – feeling again do sightseeing and experience the nightlife of Bratislava.

The only drawback of my job as a steward was that although there were several exciting speeches, discussions and presentations which interested me, I could listen only to a few of them

undisturbed. I did manage, however, to learn about the LWF Council's work and to get a basic view of the whole organization.

The theme of the Council meeting was "The Gospel Transforming Cultures" on which LWF President, Bishop Christian Krause, gave a grandiose opening speech, which focused on the following guiding principle: At the turn of the millennium the gospel is the only way to find global answers to cross-cultural global questions. This challenge is both an opportunity and a complex task for our churches. One of the most interesting aspects of the conference was to witness how the LWF makes theological and political statements in accordance with the major trends of the church and international political life. Seeing this, I am more than ever convinced that an organization such as the LWF is extremely necessary for our churches and, indeed, the whole world.



Als Steward

auf der LWB-Ratstagung

Bratislava (Slowakische Republik),

25. Juni 1999 (lwi)

- Wer mit Michaela einen Interviewtermin abmacht, kann lange warten. Und wenn es dann zum Treffen kommt, ist immer noch nicht sichergestellt, dass sie eine halbe Stunde Zeit hat. Michaela (23) ist eine vielgefragte Frau. Die slowakische Theologiestudentin aus dem Ort Martin, gut 200 Kilometer nördlich von Bratislava, wird immer wieder von den Verantwortlichen der LWB-Ratstagung, die vom 22.6. bis 29.6. in der slo-



The Stewards of
the LWF Council
Meeting
©LWF/T.Gulan

wakischen Hauptstadt stattfindet, angesprochen, um Rat gefragt oder mit Aufträgen vollgepackt. Zusammen mit zehn anderen jungen Frauen und Männern aus der Slowakei, aus Ungarn, Jugoslawien, Rumänien, Estland, Slowenien, Russland, Lettland und der Tschechischen Republik sorgt Michaela dafür, dass alles reibungslos läuft bei dieser Ratstagung mit 49 Ratsmitgliedern und zusätzlich noch rund 130 Beratern, Mitarbeiterinnen und Mitarbeitern aus der Genfer Zentrale sowie Gästen.

Zu den Hauptaufgaben der Stewards gehört es, Hilfe zu leisten, wo immer dies notwendig ist. Räume zu organisieren, Kopien zu erstellen, auch

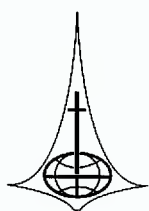
mal eine kleinere Übersetzung anzufertigen, Gäste zu führen und sogar Eintrittskarten für die Oper in Bratislava zu besorgen.

Michaela hat Erfahrung als Steward. Bereits im letzten Jahr war sie dabei, als der Rat des LWB in der Genfer Zentrale tagte. Dazugekommen ist sie durch die Anfrage ihres Professors in Systematischer Theologie, des slowakischen Generalbischofs der Evangelischen Kirche Augsburgischen Bekenntnisses, Julius Filo. Er hatte die attraktive und ambitionierte Studentin mit den ausgezeichneten Englischkenntnissen nach Genf eingeladen, und sie hatte zugesagt. Aufgrund ihrer Erfahrung aus dem letzten Jahr wurde sie deshalb bei dieser Tagung in ihrer Heimat als Koordinatorin bestimmt. Und die Arbeit macht ihr und ihren Kolleginnen und Kollegen grossen Spass. "Hier geschieht etwas, hier werden Entscheidungen gefällt, ich erfahre, was hinter manchen Vorgängen steckt, und ich lerne neue Leute kennen", so fasst sie ihre Erfahrungen zusammen.

Ein bisschen bedauert Michaela allerdings, dass die inhaltlichen Diskussionen weitgehend an ihr vorbeigehen. Nur manchmal gelingt es ihr, für eine Stunde den Beratungen zuzuhören. Denn die Theologiestudentin kann sich schon vorstellen, später einmal im ökumenischen Umfeld mitzuarbeiten. Nächsten Monat wird sie ihr erstes theologisches Examen nach fünf Jahren Studium ablegen. Anschliessend geht es dann für zwei Jahre in die USA, um weiterzustudieren. Und dann möchte sie gerne im Fach Systematische Theologie promovieren. Bereits jetzt spricht Michaela neben Englisch auch ganz gut Deutsch und Russisch. Ihr grosser Traum ist es, bald Französisch lernen zu können.

Bis es allerdings soweit ist, will sie zuerst einmal ein gutes Examen ablegen. Und sie rechnet sich dann auch gute Chancen in ihrer Kirche aus. Denn die slowakische lutherische Kirche war eine der ersten, die bereits Anfang der 50er Jahre die Frauenordination eingeführt hat. Auch der Anteil von weiblichen und männlichen Theologiestudierenden ist nahezu ausgeglichen.

Abends haben die Stewards frei. Doch das heisst nicht, dass sie dann nach Hause gehen in ihr Studentenzimmer. Wer lange genug sucht, und wer sich etwas auskennt in Bratislava, der findet sie in fröhlicher Runde in einer der vielen Studentenkneipen der slowakischen Hauptstadt. Dort wird dann nachbesprochen, was in keinem offiziellen Dokument der Ratstagung nachzulesen ist.



Survey on spiritual renewal in Africa

Tolbert Thomas Jallah, Jr., LWF intern from Liberia

Conducting a survey on spiritual renewal through youth work in the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) member churches in Africa at the request of the LWF Youth Desk during my period of youth internship has been both challenging and satisfying. It was challenging because I came to the Federation with little knowledge of my task. It was also satisfying, because, at the end of the project, I had learned and achieved a lot. I learned to appreciate the comments received during the survey from many young people in Africa.

The survey is an attempt to outline and analyze youth contributions toward spiritual renewal currently taking place in the LWF member churches in Africa. It was implemented in direct consultation with other African brothers and sisters involved in youth work in the LWF member churches and to a great extent, it reflects the opinions and views of young people in Africa.

The need to carry out a survey on *spiritual renewal* through youth work in the LWF member churches in Africa became obvious during discussions among the youth who attended the African Lutheran Youth Consultation in Okahandja, Namibia, in March 1998. Many of them showed an interest in the dynamic youth activities leading the African Lutheran churches into spiritual growth and development. Previously, participants in the LWF Ninth Assembly in Hong Kong (1997) had stated that "Christian faith needs to be lived out in a vibrant spirituality. Especially among youth, there is a strong search for spirituality, which shows the need for renewal of the liturgical life of the church. This renewal should be based on honest dialogue with youth."

As the African churches experience spiritual growth and development, we see that young people are, to a great extent, its moving force. Because of this, churches need to evaluate systematically youth work in order to better utilize the potential of young people in the ministry of the churches. The survey is taking an initial step to stimulate further discussion on the vital role which young people play in our churches. It seeks to assess and compare different models of youth work, and to share these models among the member churches in the various subregions. To summarize the findings made through the survey, the following observations can be formulated:

Within a relatively short period of time and despite the limited possibilities facing them, LWF

member churches in Africa have produced many theologians of stature, as well as lay people with a high profile on the international scene and in their own national context in church and society. Africanization, indigenization, adaptation, inculturation, and contextualization have begun to make an impact in influencing the development and growth of the LWF member churches in

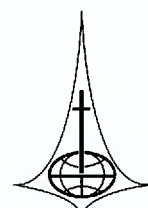
Africa. Many Lutheran seminaries and universities now offer courses in such disciplines as African worship, African traditional religion, African theology, African music, and so on. There is spiritual renewal in the context of the African church, from western-oriented models to cultural models, through the work of young people and current church leaders in Africa.

The circle is an element of perfect cultural identity among the people in several parts of Africa. The daily meal in most parts of Africa is taken in a circle, or at a round table. There is no difference among those who are in the circle. Those who are in the circle are equal in the presence of God and participate fully in sharing whatever is available in the circle. During worship services, people dance in the form of a circle, expressing their common joy and Christian faith. Church meetings, family, clan, or even public meetings are held in the form of a circle with dances.

Dancing is a part of Africa's worship, especially in the western region. When Africans dance together in the church, they express the joy of life in their community, social solidarity with one another, renewal and the building of relationships, thus proclaiming their oneness. They bring horns, whistles, drums and other musical instruments, which offer lively expression based on local culture. Dancing together as a people of promise expresses deep adoration of God, the Creator and Redeemer. The African dance of life is a liberating experience that is leading the member churches in Africa into great spiritual renewal. It is also the offer of forgiveness and



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Visitation program.
Luanda boys are
training "Capoeira"
a mixture of
fighting sport and
dance. It goes back
to a very old
tradition which
African slaves
brought back
from Brazil.
©epd-bild/Lohnes



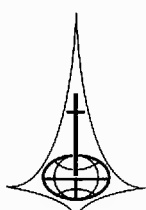
healing to members of the congregation, who through God's grace are renewed and energized to live a new life. Through worship, dancing together links us with each other and with God, giving us confidence in the future, which is in God's hands.

The songs and music during the worship service are mostly African songs, which members of the congregation can sing together, rejoicing together in their local languages. In this way, the parishioners will understand the music, through which they can feel the presence of God. In renewed Christian parishes and communities in Africa, we see an emerging pattern in which each renewed individual contributes his or her particular gift in a greater sharing of the life, work and ministry of the churches among all the members.

Drama is an excellent way to empower young people, to crystallize their ideas and put them into such form as can be shared with others. In Africa, with any use of drama, the emphasis is always upon what is happening inside the young people and also what may happen to the audience under the spell of the drama's message as revealed through them, rather than putting emphasis on the performance. The range of possibilities in drama is vast. Pantomimes lead a big parish to a sense of reverence and perhaps a

desire for commitment to and faith in the ministry of God.

The information collected during the survey reveals that many constructive things are happening in every youth department of the LWF member churches in Africa. Youth work has increased immensely in most of the member churches with a variety of programs being undertaken to articulate spiritual renewal for the growth and development of the church and society. Many young people today are involved in the life and ministry of the church. For these young people in Africa, youth work is more than learning or sharing in fellowship at youth camps, retreats, consultations, symposia, and so on. It is taking Christ to the "unchurched", to those in prison. Young people in Africa have placed a greater emphasis on evangelism, spiritual renewal, and reconciliation programs in most of their activities in the member churches. These young people are concerned about the obstacles and burning issues in the world today, and the need for entire humankind, both young and old, to urgently address these issues. The issues of interfaith dialogue, HIV/AIDS, human rights abuses, conflict solving, and many others are addressed by young people at their various meetings as they strive for spiritual renewal in church and society. There are now regional youth networks established in Africa to tackle each of these situa-



tions, bringing lasting peace and stability to men and women.

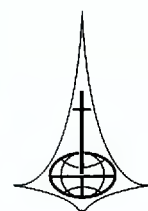
In Africa, youth are putting more time into prison and hospital ministries. They are concerned for and care about those in captivity, those who are sick and suffering from epidemics. The involvement of young people in the AIDS-awareness seminars in Tanzania, Kenya, Botswana, and a few other countries in Africa, is a clear manifestation and fulfillment of the ministries of Christ among his children.

Evangelization, the heartbeat of Jesus Christ, has become one of the focus points of the young people in the African member churches in all of their major activities. Young people are concerned about taking the gospel, which is the power of salvation for all humankind, into cities, villages, schools, and to everyone, irrespective of creed, gender and race. Today, there are youth pastors in most congregations in Africa. Young people are often active in worship services and the entire life and service of the churches in Africa.

Advocacy is an integral part of Christian witness. The church of today, and the future, needs a generation of doers, not just members who are content to talk about the great ideas of the Christian religion and yet are unwilling to follow through with positive actions. Through advocacy, the church and society are renewed from the standards of humankind to the will of God. Today, the concern of young people in the LWF member churches is to seek genuine peace, justice, equality, freedom of speech and to help the member churches live an inclusive life in the ministry of the church. Despite all the catastrophes on the African continent, including the refugee crisis, the LWF member churches are going through the stages of spiritual renewal in the African context. They are in the process of liberating themselves from the western models, structures and cultural approaches, which have consistently condemned African identity. These models continue to become evident through the work of young people in Africa and are leading the LWF member churches on the continent of Africa into spiritual renewal in the context of their own churches. Young people in Africa play an important role in the life and mission of the churches today. This is a clear demonstration of the scriptures. "Then afterwards I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions," says the prophet Joel (Joel 2:28).



Student from a school class in the Rakai-Province in Uganda. A great number of students in this school are orphans as a result of AIDS epidemic. ©LWF/M. Jensen



Report from the Hague Appeal

for Peace Conference

11-16 MAY 1999

by Tolbert Thomas Jallah, Jr.



Participants
from the LWF

1. Mark Brown,
ELCA
2. Bennet
Prasannakumar,
LWF
3. Dennis Frado,
ELCA
4. Anne Barsay,
ELCA
5. Tolbert T. Jallah,
Jr. LWF
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Time to abolish war – citizen's agenda for peace and justice in the 21st century. The world is emerging from the bloodiest, most war-ridden century in history. On the eve of the new century, it is time to create the conditions in which the primary aim of the United Nations "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war" can be realized.

The past ninety-nine years have seen more death, and more brutal death, from war, famine, and other preventable causes than any other time span in history. We have seen the tender flame of democracy snuffed out again and again by crazed dictators, military regimes and colossal international power struggles. We have seen the widening of the gulf between the favored of the earth and the wretched of the earth and the growing callousness of the former toward the latter. But the past years have also witnessed the power of the people to resist and overcome present oppression as well as age-old prejudices of gender against gender, race against race, religion against religion, and ethnic group against ethnic group.

This was the clear message over 8,000 people from all over the world, including men, women, youth, the UN - Secretary General, six Nobel-Peace prize winners, the Queen of Jordan, Prime Minister of the Netherlands, Prime Minister of Bangladesh and other government officials descended upon the Hague with during the global Hague Appeal for Peace Conference in May 1999. The conference marked the centenary of the first Hague Appeal International Peace Conference in May 1899 in the Hague. This conference was first held not to conclude or settle a

war, but to focus on peace building and conflict-prevention in the world. The beginning of the Hague process was the process of interaction of civil society and governments to prevent war and control its excesses, which ultimately brought several conventions on warfare, including the treaties of the Permanent Court of Arbitration, the International Court of Justice, the League of Nations and the United Nations. This year's conference was also a campaign to deligitimize armed conflict and create a culture of peace for the 21st century. Through this campaign and conference, participants were able to measure successes over the last century by trying to strengthen international humanitarian and human rights laws and institutions; to advance the prevention, peaceful resolution, and transformation of violent conflict, to develop and link disarmament efforts, including nuclear abolition and identify the root causes of war and develop a culture of peace.

The conference was a living example of what is known as the new, or democratic diplomacy, the collaboration of civil society, governments and intergovernmental organizations which has already proved its effectiveness in bringing about the treaty to ban landmines, the statute creating the International Criminal Court and World Court opinion on the illegality of nuclear weapons. The Hague Appeal for Peace also successfully redefined peace as not only the absence of conflict between and within states, but also the absence of economic and social injustice. At the end of the five-day gathering, the participants discussed and debated in over 400 panels, workshops and round-table discussions abolishing war and creating a culture of peace by calling on all governments and civil society to find ways to examine the causes of conflict, which include the unequal distribution of the world's vast resources and the hostility of nations and of groups within nations toward each other and develop creative ways of preventing and resolving them. Participants called on the world's leaders to abolish the arms trade, land mines and all other weapons incompatible with humanitarian law or at least to reduce their levels compatible with the prohibition of aggression enshrined in the Chapter of the United Nations.

Finally, participants called on each other to complete the work of the peace conference by pursuing the goals for peace, being committed to initiate final steps for abolishing war, for replacing the law of force with the force of law.



Child Labour :

Global Problems, Local Solutions

Robert San-Georg

International Labour Office

Imagine yourself as a child, working eighty hours per week, possibly in a hazardous, exhausting job, in an underground mine or a rock quarry, for example.

You would have no time to go to school, little time to spend with your family, and no time to play. The physical demands of the job would cause permanent damage to your body, your back, your hands, and your lungs, your hearing and eyesight. Without an education you would be stuck in a dark cycle of poverty, unable to break out.

This is not just a story. Millions of children throughout the world live like this every day. The International Labour Office (ILO), a specialized agency of the United Nations, estimates the number of working children, worldwide, aged five to fourteen, is 250 million. Nearly half of them, about 120 million, are working full time and do work that is hazardous and exploitative.

Child labor is one of humankind's most shocking and urgent problems. It is a problem with many faces...

— In Tanzania, it is the faces of children, as young as eight years old, descending thirty meters underground to dig in mines for eight hours a day, without proper lighting and ventilation.

— In Nepal, it is the faces of children sold into bonded labor to help pay off loans that their families, nonetheless, often can never repay.

— In Venezuela, it is the faces of girls, toiling long hours as domestic workers.

— And in parts of Southeast Asia, it is the faces of sexually exploited children, whose trauma is so deep that many are never able to return to a normal way of life.

Yet there is reason for optimism. Over the last few years, we have witnessed a radical shift in attitudes towards the problem. Nearly ninety countries now form a strong global partnership, working with the International Program on the Elimination of Child Labor (IPEC), within the ILO. Some 1,000 action programs worldwide have been carried out during the last six years.

Because the child-labor problem is so vast, IPEC gives top priority to action, which will bring an end to the worst forms of labor.

These include:

children working under forced labor conditions and in bondage;

children in hazardous working conditions and occupations;

children who are particularly vulnerable - such as very young working children, under twelve years of age and working girls.

IPEC is pursuing innovative programs at the national level in places like Bangladesh and Pakistan where garment manufacturing and soccer-ball production exists. In projects such as these, the methods involve:

Numerous children being withdrawn from work.

The children being provided with social protection, usually in the form of education, training and rehabilitation.

IPEC monitors the situation in production sites with surprise visits. Monitoring is not only instrumental in identifying and removing children who are already working but it has a very strong preventive function. It stops children from joining work-sites liable to monitoring.

There is a long, long way to go, to free all children from child labor. But with these kinds of approaches, progress is being made. Combined with growing support from governments, international organizations, businesses and charities, there is a good chance, on the eve of the new millennium, for a decisive breakthrough in this struggle.



LWF Human Rights
visit to Thailand,
1998.
©LWF/
O. Prostradnik



Séminaire des jeunes

Likasi, République Démocratique du Congo

M. Jules Ilunga Ngoy,

Coordinateur National de la jeunesse pour Christ (JPC)

Notre rencontre nationale des jeunes n'a pas eu lieu en 1999 à cause de la situation de guerre qui prévaut dans notre pays. Toutefois, avec le peu de moyens en notre possession, nous avons organisé un séminaire du 31 mars au 4 avril, 1999 qui a regroupé les jeunes de trois régions ecclésiastiques, notamment:

- la région ecclésiastique ou Prélature du Lwalaba
- la région ecclésiastique ou Deanery de Lubumbashi
- la région ecclésiastique du Haut-Katanga



©LWF/J.I. Ngoy

Notre séminaire a eu lieu à Likasi, une ville située à 120 km de Lubumbashi. Nous avons accueilli 60 jeunes venant de 12 paroisses. Les thèmes enseignés, sur demande de nos groupes de jeunes, étaient les suivants:

1. Comment prêcher

Ici la Révérende oratrice, Chef du Département de l'Education Chrétienne, Pasteur R. Schneider, a enseigné ce que c'est la prédication, comment il faut préparer le sermon, le but de la prédication ainsi que le comportement du prédicateur en public.

2. Les 7 paroles de la croix

Etant donné que la fête de Pâques était le 4 avril, cette leçon a été donnée le 31 mars dans le but de nous mettre en communion avec les souffrances de notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ, le rédempteur.

3. Les jeunes et la prière

Ici nous avons défini qui est jeune et les mobiles qui caractérisent les jeunes selon leur âge. Un jeune chrétien doit prier Dieu dans sa vie. En profondeur, nous avons vu: ce qu'est la prière; comment on doit prier (les étapes d'une prière); et de quelle manière Dieu exauce nos prières.

4. Les jeunes face au SIDA

Il y a un comité de district de lutte contre le SIDA

dans la ville de Likasi. Le président de ce comité a été notre orateur et a formulé son exposé tout en donnant l'origine de ce fléau du siècle; son évolution; les conséquences fâcheuses du vagabondage sexuel; la façon dont nous devons prévenir cette maladie. Il a ensuite appris à l'assemblée comment retenir le slogan ci-après: "Un homme, une femme pour toute la vie". Il nous a recommandé finalement de nous protéger purement et simplement contre le SIDA, car il existe d'autres voies de transmission. Les statistiques pour la province, a-t-il dit, sont de deux personnes infectées sur 100. A la fin nous avons joué à quelques jeux éducatifs sur le SIDA.

5. Comment gérer un groupe

Lors de cette leçon, donnée par moi-même, j'ai parlé de la définition du mot gérer; qui est responsable; que peut-il/elle faire dans son groupe, le matériel qu'un dirigeant doit utiliser pour bien remplir son rôle; enfin quelques conseils pratiques.

6. L'Etude Biblique

C'est à l'issue du colloque qui a eu lieu en Allemagne en juillet 1998, où notre Eglise Luthérienne du Congo (EELCO) a été représentée par deux jeunes et les groupes des jeunes, qu'il a été recommandé d'intensifier l'Etude Biblique, parce que les jeunes sont plus portés par la transformation industrielle actuelle. Nous avons donc saisi cette occasion pour instruire les délégués présents sur la façon de faire une étude biblique qui est tout à fait distincte d'une prédication, son but et son objectif, sans oublier les méthodes.

7. Le savoir-vivre

8. Le Saint-Esprit et son charisme

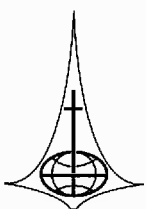
9. Les jeunes face au développement

Ici l'orateur et Trésorier Général de l'EELCO, Mr. Andreas B., a enseigné d'abord le sens du développement. Quand peut-on dire que quelqu'un est développé: on est développé si on arrive à satisfaire tous ses besoins.

10. Historique de la jeunesse Luthérienne du Congo

Ici nous avons vu que le groupe de jeunes de notre Eglise est né à Kawama, un village près de Kalemie (1er siège de l'Eglise) où a été créée la Jeunesse Pour Christ (JPC) le 5 juillet 1983. L'orateur nous a parlé des premiers dirigeants et des étapes que la JPC a franchies jusqu'à ce jour.

Enfin, nous avons clos notre séminaire par un match amical et la remise des brevets de participation à chaque délégué présent.



Youth Work

LWF member churches : Madagascar

Georges Samoela, youth secretary,
Malagasy Lutheran Church

I am happy to have this opportunity to give you some information about youth in the church and society in Madagascar.

General Information

When you look at the world map, you can see that Madagascar is an island 400 kms. off the east coast of Africa. In former times, Madagascar was called the "green island" because of the thick forest that covered the country. Later, farmers destroyed the forest, especially in southern Madagascar, leaving that area as desert. The population is about 19,000,000 of which fifty-one percent are young people below the age of thirty. Malagasy people originate from different ethnic groups coming from different countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia, Arabian countries and Africa. The official language is Malagasy, French being the second language following the French colonialization.

Youth in Malagasy Society

Earlier Malagasy tradition did not allow young people to participate in decision-making, according to the elders, because of their immaturity. They were only expected to take orders. As a result, the youth felt marginalized in social life and there was a big gap between them and the elders, which led to misunderstandings on both sides. Since young people make-up the majority of the Malagasy population, things have changed and they now struggle to be heard and included in discussions and decision-making within society.

Youth in the Church

The same problem also applies to youth in the church. Formerly, youth participation in church activities was strictly limited because the elders thought that all that was wrong and bad in the world came from the practices of youth. Consequently, youth were alienated from the life and work of the church, and it was not surprising that they left the church and looked for other spiritual groups where they could share their views. There were also conflicts among the youth themselves. The only activity open to youth in church was choir practice. Those who could not sing felt that they did not belong and, therefore, formed opposition groups to those in the choir. Having seen this antagonism within the church,

the youth department saw the need to create activities, which would attract all youth. Such activities include sports, like football, basketball and volleyball.

During the 1999 Easter celebration in Antananarivo, under the theme: "Christ the Winner", besides the evangelization campaigns to nearby local communities, youth groups organized football, basketball and volleyball competitions. A good number of young people, male and female, participated; some even came from outside the church to make up the teams.

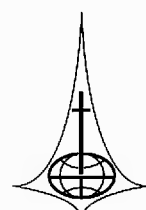
We can see that sport has become a means through which the church can reach out to people but the question people often ask is:



How can youth witness Christ through sport? It is true that practicing sport alone does not lead anywhere in the spiritual sphere. However, the sports initiated by the youth department goes together with the teaching of the Scriptures. Every game begins and ends with a prayer. The players also learn to act as a team and that by not harming their adversary during a match, they give a good example of Christian life among brothers and sisters. In this way, we have realized that the barrier which separated the youth in the choir group from those who were not is now broken. Understanding and solidarity reign among them. They can now meet together and evangelize together.

This unity and solidarity among the youth are the key to the success of our leadership. Leadership is not a one-person affair; we need to learn from one another by exchanging ideas and experiences for mutual encouragement. Let us be willing to foster youth networks in the region and subregion, as encouraged by the LWF Youth Desk so that we can reach our common goal of "UNITY" in Christ. Our victory starts with unity as we are called to witness Christ. United we can break through the obstacles that hinder our progress and so bring change into the world through the power of God.

©LWF/J. Samoela



Los Jóvenes al sur del mundo...

iii Se organizan por una iglesia más unida !!!

Silvia Behn Günther,

Iglesia Evangélica Luterana en Chile

Con colaboración de Lucas Veira Sand



lizar un "Encuentro Sinodal de Jóvenes". Contamos con la presencia de jóvenes de la IERP, IELU e ILCH, es decir, de Uruguay, Paraguay, Argentina y Chile. Este encuentro fue una instancia muy buena y enriquecedora, donde trabajamos y conversamos el documento final del Grupo de discusión de Jóvenes del Encuentro en Brasil, y además compartimos mucho nuestras realidades que, a pesar de todo, no son tan distintas. De ese campamento surgió una comunicación más masiva, implementando así de manera más concreta, el compromiso de formar una Red de Comunicación en nuestra subregión, en el ámbito juvenil (compromiso que nació en Rodeio 12, Brasil), ya que nos dimos cuenta de lo necesario que es estar en contacto permanente y poder contar con nuestros hermanos de otros países, colaborando así a la unidad de nuestra iglesia, respetando las idiosincrasias locales y la diversidad en su riqueza. Hasta el momento, ha funcionado bastante bien, siempre con el compromiso de responder cualquier información que se reciba. El compartir las diferentes vivencias y el trabajo en distintas áreas, ha sido de gran ayuda.

En el Encuentro de Jóvenes Luteranos realizado en el marco del IX Congreso Luterano Latinoamericano, en Rodeio 12 - Brasil, en Octubre pasado, hubo muchas proposiciones, buenas ideas y, por sobretodo, muchas ganas de hacer "algo" para conocernos, compartir y unirnos a través de nuestra labor como jóvenes luteranos. Al finalizar el Congreso, decidimos organizarnos en cuanto a responsabilidades, en tanto juventud dentro de las subregiones ya existentes en Latinoamérica. Cada subregión tiene, entonces, un coordinador titular y otro/s suplente/s; siendo el primero el representante oficial frente a las otras regiones, subregiones y a la FLM, y el/los coordinador/es suplente/s, su/s reemplazante/s y ayudante/s. En la subregión Cono Sur - Brasil, el coordinador titular es Lucas Veira Sand (IELU - Argentina) y las reemplazantes son Sibebe I. Massirer (IECLB - Brasil) y Silvia Behn Günther (ILCH - Chile).

En nuestra región, hemos hecho todos los esfuerzos porque esta organización funcione y podamos conocernos, apoyarnos y tendernos una mano cuando sea necesario, así como concretar tareas y proyectos, intercambiando información.

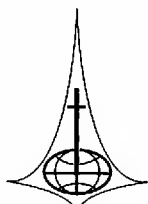
En Febrero de este año, 1999, la IELU organizó un campamento, el cual tuvo como objetivo rea-



El tener estas experiencias, participar de éstas a los demás y tener proyectos en conjunto, nos permite construir una iglesia unida desde la base, aspirando a un futuro donde los límites entre nuestros países no serán más que simples fronteras, y podremos trabajar unidos en el Cuerpo de Cristo.

World Council of Churches .
Conference on World Mission and Evangelism,
Salvador de Bahía, Brazil.
Drummers at opening worship.
©WCC/C. Black

Meeting with Latin American church leaders and international communicators.
Workshop to develop communication policy :
Ms Morena Guadalupe Murillo.
©LWF/B. Gudmundsson



Youth of the South

Organize themselves for a more united church

Silvia Behn Günther,

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile
in cooperation with Lucas Veira Sand

During the meeting of Lutheran youth, which took place within the framework of the IX Latin American Lutheran Congress in Rodeio 12, Brazil last October, several proposals, good ideas, a willingness to work, do "something" to get to know each other, share and unite through our work as Latin American Lutheran youth were put forward. At the end of the Congress we decided to organize ourselves according to our responsibilities as youth in the already existing subregions in Latin America. Each subregion now has an official coordinator and one or two deputies. The first acts as official representative to the other regions, subregions and the LWF, and the second acts as their replacements and helpers. *Lucas Veira Sand* (United Evangelical Lutheran Church (IELU) - Argentina) is the official coordinator in the Southern Cone subregion. The deputies are *Sibele I. Massirer* (Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil (IECLB) - Brazil) and *Silvia Behn Günther* (Lutheran Church in Chile (ILCH) - Chile).

We have made every effort in our region to ensure that the organization functions well so that we can get to know and support each other, lend

a hand when needed, carry out tasks and projects and share information.

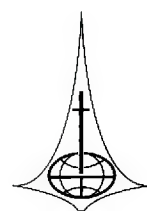
In February 1999 the IELU organized a camp, the aim of which was to hold a "Synodal Youth Meeting." There were youth from Uruguay, Paraguay, Chile and Argentina. It was a very good and enriching opportunity; we worked on and discussed the final document of the youth group from the Brazil meeting. We also shared our experiences, which, after all, are not so different.

As a result of this camp, our communication was strengthened, demonstrating in a concrete way our commitment (adopted in Rodeio 12, Brazil) to developing a youth communication network in our subregion. We have realized the importance of being in permanent contact, being able to count on our sisters and brothers from other countries, of contributing to the unity of our church, and of respecting local idiosyncrasies and the richness of diversity. Until now, it worked quite well, and there is always a commitment to respond to any information received. It has been very helpful to share our different experiences and work in different areas.

On the basis of these experiences, sharing with others and having common projects we can build a united church toward a future where material boundaries would become simple borders and we would work together in the Body of Christ.



Youth camp in
Argentina, 1999.
Trekking in the
Taudil region.
©LWF/S. Behn.



Feeling like a stranger or at home?

by Karin Manz



©LWF

During my studies in theology and French at the University of Heidelberg in Germany, I experienced that mostly men's ideas and man-made theology is taught and considered as standard. I always had problems in understanding this kind of theology and often felt like a stranger. I thought it was due to limited intellectual abilities on my part. But discovering feminist theology, which enriched me and helped me to grow in my faith and in my conception of theology, I discovered that my way of doing theology is not intellectual but contextual and thus far removed from all I learned at university. Whenever I could, I tried to satisfy my hunger for this kind of liberation theology, but it was always considered as additional to the traditional theology taught at the university. So the question still remained: Had I got it wrong? My church could not help me to solve the problem, and even worse: the more I learned from feminist theology, the more I felt on the outside of my own church. I realized that even there the theology practiced was mostly patriarchal.

In 1993, I came in touch with the LWF for the first time. I was delegated by the Evangelical Church in Württemberg to the European Youth Consul-

tation of the LWF in Budapest, Hungary. It was a very intense experience in a community made up of people from all different parts of Europe with all kinds of concerns and needs. I had a serious discussion with a delegate from Poland about the ordination of women. Even if our perspectives were very different and it was hard for me to understand his point of view, it was good that the discussion did not prevent us from worshipping together in full communion. At the Assembly in Hong Kong, where I also was sent as a youth delegate, I had the same divided experience. I had the possibility of sharing my vision of an inclusive church with the other youth delegates and stewards as I was involved in the preparation of the youth presentation "LWF 2000." On the one hand, it was nice to see how quickly we agreed on our main ideas:

- inclusive church

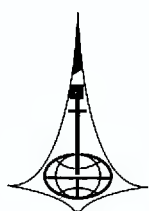
- ecumenism

- equal partnership North-South-East-West

on the other hand, I was under the impression that during the plenary sessions not everyone was familiar with the methodology that was of a typically north-western approach and seemed to me to be very cognitive. This methodology automatically led to the exclusion of certain groups causing many valuable ideas to get lost. I became aware once again that despite the quota system in the church, men from the rich industrial nations hold the reins of power. Apart from this frustrating experience, I was enthusiastic to see that it was possible to bring our visions for the church and the reality together during the Bible groups and services, where a great sense of community spirit could be felt. It also helped me to meet other sisters. We encouraged each other to continue bringing forward the concerns that seem important to us and to remain sincere to ourselves.

Sometimes it is difficult for me to feel at home within the church. I feel pressured to find a way to create, in dialogue with other members, a more inclusive church. The internship at the Women's Desk of the Lutheran World Federation, Department for Mission and Development here in Geneva will help me to fulfil this task because during this period, among other tasks, I will assist in the preparation of a Gender-Training Manual.

I arrived in Geneva at the beginning of September and was received by sunshine and many friendly and kind colleagues. This will make it easier for me to feel at home here during the next nine months.



News in brief

EGYPT (lwi)

...World YWCA has new president.

At the World Council held in Cairo, Egypt from 18 to 24 July 1999, the World Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), elected Jane Wolfe as the organization's president for the next four years. Ms. Wolfe has been a YWCA leader since 1969, when she was first elected to the board of the association in her home town of Little Rock Arkansas, United States of America. She has been a member of the World YWCA Executive Committee since 1992, serving as a vice-president since 1995. Wolfe replaces Anita Andersson from Sweden. The World YWCA is the largest and oldest women's movement in the world, uniting 26 million women and girls in over 100 countries through 95 affiliated autonomous national associations. The current general secretary, Dr. Musimbi Kanyoro from Kenya, served as secretary for Women in Church and Society (WICAS) with the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Department for Mission and Development (DMD) from January 1988 to January 1998.

ITALIEN (lwi)

Theologische Ausbildung entscheidend für die Mission der Kirche

Weiterentwicklung der Lehrinhalte auf der Tagesordnung einer LWB-Konsultation

Rom/Genf, 22. September 1999 (lwi) - Die theologische Ausbildung hat eine Schlüsselrolle in der Entwicklung einer Sprache für Verkündigung

und Lehre in der Kirche, die gottgefällig, konfessionell glaubwürdig, ökumenisch verbindlich und kulturell überzeugend ist. Das erklärten Theologieprofessoren und -professorinnen lutherischer und ökumenischer theologischer Institutionen aus verschiedenen Regionen der Welt.

Zum Abschluss einer Konsultation zur theologischen Ausbildung des Lutherischen Weltbundes (LWB) in Rom (Italien) vom 23. bis zum 27. August 1999 formulierten Theologen und Theologinnen an Lehrinstitutionen in 33 Ländern aus allen Regionen der Welt eine Botschaft, in der sie die Kirchen, die theologischen Institutionen und den LWB ermutigen, den Prozess der Überprüfung und Neubestimmung theologischer Ausbildung im Dienst der Mission Gottes fortzusetzen.

SWITZERLAND (excerpt from eni)

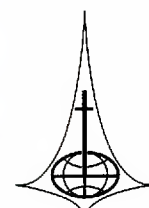
Children must no longer be targets of war, UN official says

Pointing out that 90 percent of casualties caused by current armed conflicts are civilians, mostly women and children - compared to 45 percent in the Second World War and just 5 percent in the First World War - a high-ranking UN official has pleaded with churches to help halt civilian casualties. "We must not let this happen!" said Olara A. Otunnu.

Speaking on 28 August at a meeting in Geneva of the World Council of Churches' (WCC) Central Committee, Otunnu, who is UN secretary general Kofi Annan's newly-appointed Special Represen-



House built on the mine field near Battambang, Cambodia.
©LWF/R. Karasch





This 14 year-old girl is alone taking care of her mother suffering from AIDS. The girl - after prostituting herself - is now trained as a seamstress.
©LWF/M.Jensen

tative for Children and Armed Conflict, urged the WCC to work with the UN and other humanitarian agencies to create "a zone of peace" around children, protecting them from armed conflict, ensuring that they are not used as soldiers, and guaranteeing that humanitarian aid reaches them when they are caught up in armed conflict situations. Hospitals and schools should also be banned as targets in armed conflicts, he said. Otunnu told the committee he hoped the WCC "will add its powerful voice" in support of the UN Security Council's ground-breaking resolution of 26 August "to save children from the scourge of war." In a press conference after his address, Otunnu said that the resolution marked "the first time the UN Security Council has made the link between its peace and security concerns and the impact of these concerns on children."

SWITZERLAND (excerpt from eni)

From Bison to Geneva, WCC's youngest president has a mission to fulfil

"He had no clue who I was or what the World Council of Churches (WCC) was". Kathryn Bannister of the small town of Bison, in the US state of Kansas, chuckled as she recalled the visit of a reporter who sought her out for an interview shortly after she was elected last December in Harare as one of the eight presidents of the world's biggest ecumenical organization. Bannister, a 29-year-old United Methodist minister, is one of two current women presidents, Agnes Abuom of the Anglican Church of Kenya is the other. She is currently the youngest president and the second youngest president ever. Mrs. Priyanka Mendis, who completed her term last December at the 8th WCC Assembly in Harare, was 25 when elected by the 7th Assembly in Canberra in 1991.

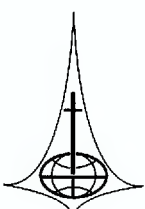
The role of women and youth within the WCC was improving, Bannister told ENI during a meeting in Geneva of the WCC Central Committee. "The involvement of women and youth is not the last thing people at the WCC think about anymore," she said, "and for some people it's now the first thing they think about, that's progress."

THAILAND (ECPAT Newsletter)

The First International Assembly of ECPAT (End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography, and Trafficking in Children for Sexual Purposes) took place in Bangkok, Thailand, 16-20 September 1999 with representatives of the ECPAT network from all over the world. It will be a time of inspiration as stories from around the world are told of the way NGOs, governments and other organizations are working to end the scourge of child sexual abuse. This meeting will elect a new international executive to serve the ECPAT movement for the following two years.

USA

"Linking a Caring Community" - On 21-23 October the Lutheran AIDS Network National (LANET) Conference took place in Rosemont, Illinois, USA. Workshop topics included: "AIDS and Communities of Color," "The Global Impact of AIDS," "Educating and Involving Youth," "What does the Gospel Say?" and many more... The conference further included site visits to community AIDS ministries, inspiring worship and networking opportunities and a LANET business meeting. The HIV/AIDS epidemic is far from over. As people of faith and people of compassion we have an ever-growing faith imperative to minister to the sick, seek justice in all things and look to the power of light amidst the darkness of disease, discrimination and fear.



Upcoming events

21-28 January

The Asian Students and Youth Gathering (ASYG) - will take place in Taiwan. Participants will be 110 Asian youth and students, including four representing the LWF/DMD Youth Desk. During the gathering there will be three overlapping consultative processes that will be initiated: a national level, intra-movement level and subregional level. These processes will endeavor to come up with a common understanding and analysis of issues and concerns related to development and globalization, and the role of young people in society, as well as to identify and develop alternative paradigms and a common program of action on the different levels mentioned above.

24-30 January

Turning Point 2000 - An International Lutheran Youth Evangelism Conference in Sydney, Australia. The vision is to start off the new millennium with a conference focussed on the question: How do we carry out God's mission and ministry to young people into the 21st century? Around 300 young people and adults from both Australia and around the world are expected at this event. The invited participants are key leaders or potential key leaders in youth ministry in the Lutheran churches around the world.

3 March

World Day of Prayer for Women - theme: "Talitha kumi - young woman, stand up!" Liturgy prepared by women in Indonesia. This day of prayer is celebrated each first Friday in March by women in some 170 countries worldwide.

21-26 May

The First International African Continental and Global Youth Assembly, under the auspices of the Twenty-first Century African Youth Movement and collaborating organizations, will take place in Freetown, the capital city of Sierra Leone. The assembly will celebrate PEACE (Participation Ensures Advancement and Concerns Everyone) and map out strategies for African and African Diaspora youth collaboration. The conference will focus on two projects: Access to technology and the creation of an international youth business mentoring program.

1-4 June

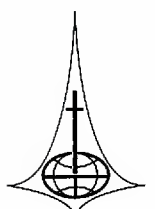
Gathering for Protestant students from the Baltic region will take place in Kiel, Germany. The theme is: "Thou hast set my feet in a broad place" (Psalm 31:8). The Evangelical Student Parishioners of the Christian-Albrecht-University Kiel invite students from countries surrounding the Baltic see to the first Evangelical Church-Day for students from this region. Planned activities include discussions and presentations, choir workshop, dance, international exchange, a lot of fun and a big closing party.

Summer/autumn

International seminar on inter-religious dialogue and new religions - The Danish Student Christian Movement (SCM) is organizing a week-long seminar on dialogue between people of different faiths, to take place in Århus, Denmark. The seminar will also look at new religions in Europe. Participation is open to anyone who is interested in the subject, but the number of participants is limited to 40. For information contact Danish SCM, att. Liselotte Højgaard, Kløversmarksvej 4, DK-8200 Århus N. Denmark. E-mail: kirketje@post4tele.dk.



Logo World Day of Prayer for Women, 2000
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Pen-pals

I READ YOUR *Youth magazine*, June 1998, and I would like to have a pen-pal from Australia, Norway or America. I am a young woman aged 19. My hobbies are: reading romance novels, listening to slow music, swimming, watching movies and visiting historical places.



LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION
DEPARTMENT OF WORLD SERVICE
P.O. BOX 1133, MAPUTO, MOZAMBIQUE

Ms. Tigist FIKADU
P.O. Box 91
Arssi, Assella
Ethiopia

I would like a female pen-pal from the USA or Europe. My hobbies are: watching dramas on TV and speaking English with different people. I hope you will answer me very soon.

Mr. Fitsum G/MICHAEL
P.O. Box 903
Awassa, Ethiopia



I am an Ethiopian girl. I am 18 years old and go to high school. I want to have a pen-pal, preferably a young man above my age. My hobbies are: going to the cinema, reading books, photography, nature, friendship and listening to music.

Ms. Tigist EKUBAY
P.O. Box 6330
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

The *Youth magazine*, as an international publication, really connects youth of different races to a common goal. Your column on pen-pals is also of great significance toward establishing international friendships. I would like to have pen-pal friends from Switzerland, Europe, America or Australia. We are interested in exchanging gifts and photos as well as information about our country. My wife and I are nurses, working in the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus health center. We have one child. Our hobbies are: reading the Bible, traveling and enjoying life with our son. All letters in English will be answered.

Mr. Endalew GEMACHU
P.O. Box 12599 via Aira O.N.S.
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

I am a young man aged 24 and single. I am looking for pen-pals from all over the world. My hobbies are reading, watching football matches, watching movies, playing football, telling stories and going to church. I am also very much interested in exchanging postcards, photos and kind words of comfort. I reply to letters in English.

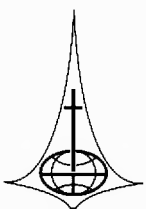
Mr. Livingstone GUNDU
475 Glen-Norah A
P.O. Glen-Norah
Harare, Zimbabwe

I am looking forward to a pen-pal from any part of the world, except from Ethiopia. I am a Christian Ethiopian young man aged 19 and my hobbies are: exchanging gifts and photos plus introducing culture into the country. I reply to letters in English.

Mr. Ammanuel KENO
Region 6 (six) National Administration
Assosa Zone
Assosa, Ethiopia

I am a young man aged 25 and am looking for pen-pals from all over the world, especially from Switzerland, England and Italy. My hobbies are: traveling, listening to gospel music, exchanging gifts and photos. Please reply in English.

Mr. Tamirirashie M. SHOKO
House N° 05
N° 1 Colliery
Hwange, Zimbabwe



"I would like to have a pen friend!"

I am a first-year student of the Akatsi Training College in the Volta Region of Ghana and I am 18 years old and the second born of my parents. My fields of study are social and environmental studies. My hobbies include: reading the Bible, exchanging photographs, collecting stamps, listening to music, playing the piano and playing basket ball. I would be happy to receive pen friends from all over the world, in particular from Japan.

Mr. Leslie Edem Prosper KPORJRO
c/o Alice Afua Bathor
Sacred Heart Hospital
P.O. Box AB 14,
Abour-Weme, Ghana

I am interested in having pen-pals from any part of the world. I am an 18 year old boy and my hobbies are: learning about Scripture, listening to gospel music and playing the organ. I reply to letters in English.

Mr. Kobina S. INKOOM
P.O. Box 276
Sekondi, W.R.
Ghana

I am 18 years of age and would like to have a pen-pal. My hobbies are: singing religious songs, studying, taking photos and playing football.

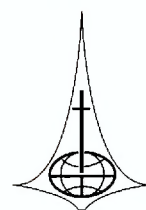
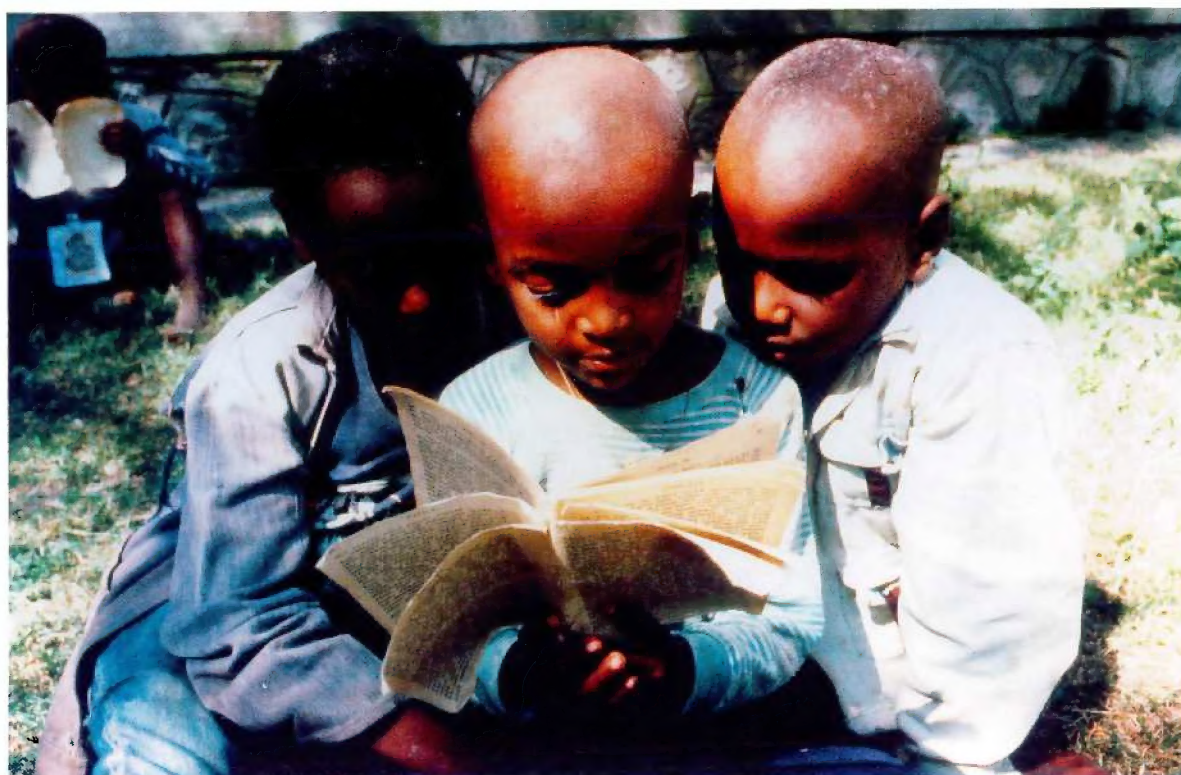
Mr. Pitchou Leonard MGOYMSIMBI
Evangelical Lutheran Church in Congo
P.O. Box 23294
Kitwe, Zambia

I am an Ethiopian girl and a high school student of the 11th grade. I would like to have a pen friend. My hobbies are: listening to music (especially spiritual and instrumental music), reading, visiting historical places, swimming, watching video films. I am looking for a true friendship with the aim of introducing my culture and also know about the culture of other nations. I prefer to correspond with a young man above my age.

Ms. Lydia SOLOORO
P.O. Box 120109
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

I'm an Ethiopian girl and I'm 18 years old and go to high school. I would like to have male pen-pals between the ages of 18-25 from all over the world. My hobbies are: art, music, cinema, painting, nature, correspondence and friendship.

Ms. Selamawit TEREFE
P.O. Box 17114
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia



Letters

to the Editor

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Youth Desk staff for the wonderful and interesting to read Youth magazine. I have been receiving the magazine since the HIV/AIDS Workshop that was held in Zimbabwe in 1997 in which I participated. I'm also grateful for the report that was developed from that same workshop. The youth ministry, through its outreach and development programs, has made me who I am at work and in social life. Thank you once more for the wonderful magazine.

*Motswaledi Peter Ternane,
South Africa*

I would like to express my sincere thanks to the federation for a job being well done in the compilation of issues concerning the social, economic and, last but not least, political spheres throughout the world. The magazine usually contains very touching stories of the everyday happening in our lives. Keep it up!

*Livingstone Gundu,
Zimbabwe*

Thank you very much for the magazines you have been sending me. Recently, I received the February 1999 issue. It contained many important messages. Let God bless you for the time you spent on them.

*Tezera Wolde Medhin,
Ethiopia*

Publications

from the Youth Desk

Spiritual Renewal
Report on Youth Work in the LWF Member Churches in Africa, September 1999 - in English

Report on European Lutheran Youth Consultation
Strasbourg, France 22-26 May 1999 - in English

Report on HIV/AIDS Workshop
Chennai, India - 13-17 November 1998 - in English

Report on the Pre-Assembly Youth Conference
Bangkok, Thailand, June 29-July 5, 1997
"Be not ashamed, Christ has set us free" - in English
"Schämt Euch nicht, Christus hat uns befreit" - auf Deutsch

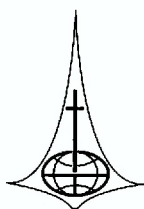
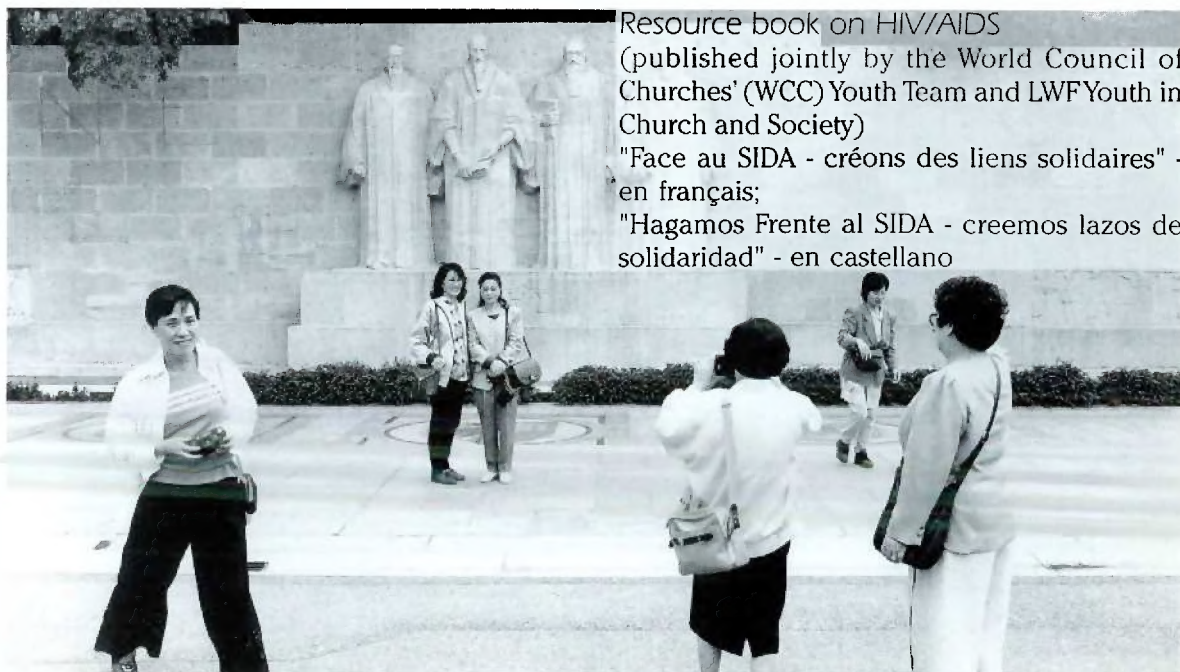
"Young Women Leaders - From Vision to Reality"
an Evaluation and Report on the LWF Three-Year Leadership Training Program for Younger Women 1994-97 - in English

Report on Youth HIV/AIDS Workshop
Bulawayo, Zimbabwe 17-21 May 1996 - in English

HIV/AIDS brochure
Produced by the HIV/AIDS Workshop in Windhoek, Namibia, May 1993 (jointly organized by the World Council of Churches' (WCC) Youth Team and LWF Youth in Church and Society) - in German, French, Portuguese and Spanish

Resource book on HIV/AIDS
(published jointly by the World Council of Churches' (WCC) Youth Team and LWF Youth in Church and Society)
"Face au SIDA - créons des liens solidaires" - en français;
"Hagamos Frente al SIDA - creemos lazos de solidaridad" - en castellano

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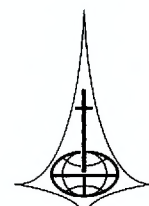
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